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STORIES FROM BALZAC.

TRANSLATED BY
**WILLIAM WILSON AND THE COUNT
STENBOCK,**

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MADAME DE DEY'S LAST RECEPTION.

" Sometimes they saw that by some phenomenon of Vision or Locomotion he could abolish Space in both its moods—Time and Distance—whereof the one is intellectual and the other physical."—LOUIS LAMBART.

ONE evening in the month of November, 1793, the principal inhabitants of Carentan were collected in the salon of Madame de Dey, who held an Assembly every evening. Certain circumstances which would have attracted no notice in a large town, but were such as to mightily interest a small one, imparted a peculiar importance to this customary gathering. Two days before, Madame de Dey had closed her doors to her visitors on the ground of indisposition, and had also announced that she would be unable to receive them the following evening. At an ordinary time these two events would have produced the same effect at Carentan as a *relâche* at all the theaters produces in Paris; on these days existence seems in a sense incomplete. But in 1793 the action of Madame de Dey was one which might lead to the most disastrous consequences. At that time, a step involving a noble in the least risk was nearly always a matter of life and death. In order to understand properly the keen curiosity and petty craftiness which on that evening animated the faces of all these respectable Normans, and still more, in order to share the secret perplexities of Madame de Dey, it is necessary to explain the part she played at Carentan. As the critical position in which she was situated at this time was no doubt the position of many during the Revolution, the sympathies of not a few of my readers will add their own color to this narrative.

Madame de Dey was the widow of a lieutenant-general decorated with several orders. At the beginning of the emigration she had left the Court, and as she owned considerable property in the neighborhood of Carentan, she

had taken refuge there in the hope that the influence of the Terror would make itself but little felt in those parts. This supposition, founded on an exact knowledge of the country, proved correct, for the ravages of the Revolution in Lower Normandy were slight. Although formerly, when she came to visit her property, she had only associated with the local *noblesse*, now, out of policy, she opened her doors to the principal townspeople and the new authorities of Carentan, exerting herself to flatter them by the compliment of her acquaintance, and at the same time to avoid awaking their hatred or their jealousy. Kind and courteous, gifted with an indescribable sweetness of manner, she knew how to please without recourse to cringing or entreaty, and had thus succeeded in winning general esteem. This was due to her exquisite tact, which by its sage promptings enabled her to steer a difficult course and satisfy the exigencies of a mixed society: she neither humiliated the touchy self-conceit of the parvenus, nor shocked the sensibilities of her old friends.

At the age of about thirty-eight, she still preserved—not that fresh buxom beauty which distinguishes the girls of Lower Normandy, but a slender, so to speak, aristocratic type. Her features were delicately chiseled and her figure pliant and graceful. When she spoke, her pale face seemed to light up with fresh life. Her large dark eyes were full of kindly courtesy, but an expression of religious calm within them seemed to show that the principle of her existence lay no longer in herself. She had been married at an early age to an old and jealous soldier, and the falsehood of her position in the midst of a dissolute court had no doubt done much to spread a veil of grave melancholy over a face which must once have beamed with all the charm and vivacity of love. Obliged to repress unceasingly the instinctive impulses and emotions of woman, at a time when she still feels rather than reflects, with her passion had remained virgin in the depth of her heart. Thus her chief attraction was derived from this inward youthfulness, which betrayed itself at certain moments in her countenance, and gave her ideas an innocent expression of desire. Her appearance commanded respect, but in her manner and her voice, impulses toward an unknown future, such as spring in the heart of a young girl, were continually showing themselves. The least susceptible

men soon found themselves in love with her, and yet were impressed with a sort of fear of her, inspired by her courtly bearing. Her soul, great by nature but rendered strong by cruel struggles, seemed to be raised too high for common humanity, and of this men appeared to be conscious. To such a soul, a lofty passion is a necessity. Thus all Madame de Dey's affections were concentrated in one single sentiment—the sentiment of maternity. The happiness and pleasures of which she had been deprived as a wife she found again in the intense love she bore her son. She loved him, not only with the pure and deep devotion of a mother, but with the coquetry of a mistress and the jealousy of a wife. She was miserable when he was far from her, anxious when he had gone out; she could never see enough of him; she lived only in him and for him. To give an idea of the strength of this sentiment in Madame de Dey, it will be enough to add that this son, besides being her only child, was the last relation left her, the only creature on whom she could fasten the hopes and fears and joys of her life. The late count was the last of his family, and the countess the sole heiress of hers, so that every worldly calculation and interest combined with the noblest needs of the soul to intensify in her heart a sentiment already so strong in the heart of woman. It was only by infinite care that she had succeeded in rearing her son, and this had endeared him still more to her. The doctor had pronounced twenty times over that she must lose him, but she was confident in her own hopes and presentiments. So in spite of the decrees of the faculty, she had the inexpressible joy of seeing him pass safely through the perils of infancy, and then of watching with wonder the continued improvement of his health.

Thanks to her constant care, her son had grown into a young man of so much promise that at the age of twenty he was looked upon as one of the most accomplished gentlemen at the Court of Versailles. Above all, happy in a crown unattained by the efforts of every mother, she was adored by her son; they understood one another, heart to heart, in fraternal sympathy. If they had not been already bound together by the bonds of nature, they would have instinctively felt for each other that mutual friendship between men which is so rarely met with in life.

The young count had been appointed sub-lieutenant at

the age of eighteen, and in obedience to the code of honor of the day had followed the princes in their emigration.

Thus it was impossible for Madame de Dey, being noble, rich, and the mother of an emigrant, to hide from herself the dangers of her cruel situation. With no other aim than to save her large fortune for her son, she had given up the happiness of accompanying him; but when she read at Carentan the stringent laws under which the republic was confiscating every day the property of emigrants, she exulted in her act of courage, for was she not preserving her son's wealth at the risk of her own life? Later on, when she heard of the terrible executions decreed by the Convention, she slept in peace, knowing that her only treasure was in safety, far from danger and the scaffold. She congratulated herself in the belief that she had taken the best means of preserving both her treasures at once. By consecrating to this secret thought the concessions which those unhappy times demanded, she neither compromised her womanly dignity nor her aristocratic convictions, but hid her sorrows under a cold veil of mystery.

She had grasped all the difficulties which awaited her at Carentan. To come there and fill the first place was in itself a daily tempting of the scaffold. But supported by her motherly courage, she was enabled to win the affection of the poor by consoling the misery of all without distinction, and to make herself indispensable to the rich by ministering to their pleasures.

She entertained at her house the procureur of the commune, the mayor, the president of the district, the public prosecutor, and even the judges of the revolutionary court. Of these personages the first four were unmarried, and paid their addresses to her. Each of them hoped she would marry him, either from fear of the harm that it was in their power to do her, or for the sake of the protection which they had to offer her. The public prosecutor, formerly an attorney at Caen, employed to manage the countess's business, adopted an artifice which was most dangerous for her. He tried a generous and devoted line of conduct, in the hope of inspiring her with affection. In this way he was the most formidable of all her suitors, and as she had formerly been a client of his, he alone knew intimately the condition and extent of her fortune. His passion was therefore re-enforced by all the desires of avarice,

and further supported by immense power—the power of life and death over the whole district. This man, who was still young, proceeded with so fine a show of generosity, that Madame de Dey had not as yet been able to form a true estimate of him. But despite the danger of a trial of craft with Normans, she made use of all the inventive wit and duplicity bestowed by nature on women to play off these rivals one against the other. By gaining time, she hoped to reach the end of her difficulties safe and sound. At this period, the Royalists of the interior went on flattering themselves from day to day that on the morrow they would see the end of the republic. It was this persuasion which brought many of them to ruin.

In spite of these difficulties, by the exercise of considerable address, the countess had maintained her independence up to the day on which she had determined, with unaccountable imprudence, to close her doors to her guests. She inspired such a real and deep interest, that the people who had come to her house that evening were seriously perturbed when they heard it was impossible for her to receive them. Then, with that barefaced curiosity which is ingrained in provincial manners, they immediately began to make inquiries as to what trouble, or annoyance, or illness, she suffered from. To these questions an old housekeeper named Brigitte answered, that her mistress kept the room and would see no one, not even the members of her household.

The semi-cloistral life led by the inhabitants of a small town forms a habit of analyzing and explaining the actions of others so germane to them as to become invincible. So, after having pitied Madame de Dey, without really knowing whether she was happy or unhappy, each one set himself to discover the cause of her sudden retirement.

"If she were ill," said the first inquisitor, "she would have sent for advice; but the doctor has been at my house the whole day playing chess. He was joking with me and saying that there is only one disease nowadays—and that's incurable."

This jest was hazarded with caution.

Men and women, old and young, set themselves to scour the vast field of conjecture; each one thought he spied a secret, and this secret occupied all their imaginations.

By the next day their suspicions had grown more venom-

ous. As life in a small town is balanced up to date, the women learned, the first thing in the morning, that Brigitte had made larger purchases at the market than usual. This was an indisputable fact. Brigitte had been seen very early in the Place, and—marvelous to relate!—she had bought the only hare there was to be got. Now, the whole town knew that Madame de Dey did not care for game, so this hare became the object of endless speculation. Then, as the old men were taking their usual stroll, they observed a sort of concentrated activity in the countess's house, betrayed by the very precautions that the servants took to conceal it. The valet was beating a carpet in the garden. The evening before no one would have noticed it, but as every one was constructing a romance of his own, this carpet served them for a foundation. Each person had a different tale.

The second day, the principal personages of Carentan hearing that Madame de Dey announced that she was unwell, met for the evening at the house of the mayor's brother, a retired merchant. He was a married man, honorable, and generally respected, the countess herself having a great regard for him. On this occasion all the aspirants to the rich widow's hand had a more or less probable story to tell, while each of them pondered how to turn to his own profit the secret which obliged her to compromise herself in the way she had. The public prosecutor imagined all the details of a drama in which her son was to be brought to the countess by night. The mayor believed that a priest who had refused the oaths had come from La Vendée, and sought refuge. The president of the district was convinced it was a Chouan or Vendéan leader, hotly pursued. Others inclined to a noble escaped from the prisons of Paris. In short, everybody suspected that the countess had been guilty of one of those acts of generosity, denominated by the laws of that time "crimes," and such as might bring her to the scaffold. However, the public prosecutor whispered that they must be silent and try to save the unfortunate lady from the abyss into which she was hurrying.

"If you publish this affair abroad," he added, "I shall be obliged to interfere, search her house, and then—"

He said no more, but every one understood his reticence.

The countess's true friends were so much alarmed for

her, that, on the morning of the third day, the procureur syndic of the commune got his wife to write her a note, entreating her to hold her reception that evening as usual. The old merchant, bolder still, presented himself during the morning at Madame de Dey's house. Confident in his desire to serve her, he insisted on being shown in, when, to his utter amazement, he caught sight of her in the garden, engaged in cutting the last flowers in her borders to fill her vases.

"There's no doubt she has given refuge to her lover," said the old man, struck with pity for this charming woman. The strange expression of her face confirmed his suspicions. Deeply moved by a devotion natural in woman but always touching to us—because every man is flattered by the sacrifices a woman makes for one of them—the merchant informed the countess of the reports which were going about the town, and of the danger she was in. "For," he concluded, "if certain of our functionaries would not be disinclined to pardon your heroism, if a priest were the object, no one will have any pity on you, if it is discovered that you are sacrificing yourself to the dictates of the heart."

At these words, Madame de Dey looked at him in such a strange, wild way, that, old man as he was, he could not help shuddering.

"Come," said she, taking him by the hand and leading him into her own room. After making sure that they were alone, she drew from her bosom a soiled and crumpled letter. "Read it," she cried, pronouncing the words with a violent effort.

She fell back into her easy-chair completely overcome. While the old merchant was looking for his spectacles and wiping them clean, she raised her eyes to his face, and for the first time gazed at him curiously; then she said, sweetly, and in a changed voice:

"I can trust you."

"Am I not going to take a share in your crime?" answered the worthy man, simply.

She shuddered. For the first time in that little town, her soul found sympathy in the soul of another. The old merchant understood immediately both the dejection and the joy of the countess. Her son had taken part in the expedition of Granville; he had written to his mother from

the depth of his prison to give her one sad, sweet hope. Confident in his plan of escape, he named three days within which he would present himself at her house in disguise. The fatal letter contained heart-rending adieus in case he should not be at Carentan by the evening of the third day. He also entreated his mother to remit a considerable sum of money to the messenger who had undertaken to carry this missive to her through innumerable dangers.

The paper quivered in the old man's hands.

"And this is the third day," cried Madame de Dey. Then she rose hastily, took the letter, and began to walk up and down the room.

"You have not been altogether prudent," said the merchant. "Why did you have provisions got in?"

"But he may arrive dying with hunger, worn out with fatigue, and—"

She could not go on.

"I am certain of my brother," answered the old man. "I will go and get him on your side."

The merchant summoned up all the keenness which he had formerly employed in his commercial affairs. He gave the countess the most prudent and sagacious directions, and after having agreed together as to everything they both were to say and do, the old men invented a plausible pretext for visiting all the principal houses of Carentan. He announced in each that he had just seen Madame de Dey, and that she would hold her reception that evening, in spite of her indisposition. In the cross-examination which each family subjected him to on the nature of the countess's malady, his keenness was a match for the shrewd Normans. He managed to start on the wrong track almost every one who busied themselves with this mysterious affair. His first visit did wonders; it was to an old lady who suffered from gout. To her he related that Madame de Dey had almost died from an attack of gout of the stomach, and went on to say that the famous Tronchin having formerly prescribed, on a similar occasion, the skin of a hare, flayed alive, to be laid on the chest, and for the patient to lie in bed without stirring, the countess, who was in imminent danger two days before, after having scrupulously carried out Tronchin's extraordinary prescription, now felt sufficiently convalescent to receive any one who liked to visit her that evening. This tale had an enor-

mous success, and the doctor of Carentan, himself a Royalist *in petto*, increased its effect by the earnestness with which he discussed the remedy. However, suspicion had taken too deep root in the minds of certain obstinate or philosophic persons to be entirely dissipated; so that evening the guests of Madame de Dey were eager to arrive at her house at an early hour, some to spy into her face, some out of friendship, and most from astonishment at her marvelous cure. They found the countess sitting in her salon at the corner of the large chimney-piece.

Her room was almost as severe as the salons of Carentan; for, to avoid wounding her narrow-minded guests, she had denied herself the pleasures of luxury to which she had been accustomed before, and had made no changes in her house. The floor of the reception-room was not even polished; she let the old dingy stuffs still hang upon the walls, still kept the country furniture, burned tallow candles, and in fact followed the fashions of Carentan. She had adopted provincial life without shrinking from its cruelest pettinesses or its most disagreeable privations. But knowing that her guests would pardon her any expenditure conducive to their own comfort, she neglected nothing which could afford them personal enjoyment: at her house they were always sure of an excellent dinner. She even went so far as to feign avarice, to please their calculating minds, and led them on to disapprove of certain details as concessions to luxury, in order to show that she could yield with grace.

Toward seven o'clock in the evening the upper middle-class society of Carentan was assembled at her house, and formed a large circle round her hearth. The mistress of the house, supported in her trouble by the old merchant's compassionate glances, submitted with unheard-of courage to the minute questionings and stupid, frivolous talk of her guests. But at every rap of the knocker, and whenever a footstep sounded in the street, she could scarcely control her emotion. She raised discussions affecting the prosperity of the district, and such burning questions as the quality of ciders, and was so well seconded by her confidant that the company almost forgot to spy upon her, the expression of her face was so natural and her assurance so imperturbable. However, the public prosecutor and one of the judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal kept silence,

watching attentively the least movement of her features, and listening, in spite of the noise, to every sound in the house. Every now and then they would ask some question calculated to embarrass her, but these she answered with admirable presence of mind. She proved how great a mother's courage can be.

After having arranged the card-tables and settled every one to Boston, or reversi, or whist, Madame de Dey still remained talking with the greatest nonchalance to some young people; she played her part like a consummate actress. Presently she led them on to ask for loto, pretended to be the only person who knew where it was, and left the room.

“*Ma pauvre Brigitte,*” she cried, “I feel almost suffocated.”

Her eyes were brilliant with fever and grief and impatience as she dried the tears which started quickly from them. “He is not coming,” she said, looking into the bedroom into which she had come. “Here I can breathe and live. But in a few minutes more he will be here; for he is alive, I am certain he is alive. My heart tells me so. Do you not hear something, Brigitte? Oh, I would give the rest of my life to know whether he is in prison or walking across the country. I would give anything not to think.”

She looked round once again to see if everything was in order in the room. A good fire burned brightly in the grate, the shutters were shut close, the furniture was polished until it shone again; the very way in which the bed was made was enough to prove that the countess herself, as well as Brigitte, had been busy about the smallest details. Her hopes, too, were manifest in all the delicate care that had evidently been spent upon this room. The scent of the flowers she had placed there seemed to shed forth, mingled with their own perfume, the gracious sweetness and the charest caresses of love. Only a mother could thus have anticipated a soldier's wants, and prepared him such complete satisfaction of them. A dainty meal, choice wines, slippers, clean linen—in short, everything necessary or agreeable to a weary traveler, were collected together, that he might want for nothing, and that the delights of home might remind him of a mother's love.

The countess went and placed a seat at the table, as if to

realize her prayers and increase the strength of her illusions. As she did so, she cried in a heart-rending voice, "Brigitte!"

"Ah, madame, he *will* come; he can not be far off. I am certain that he is alive and on the way," replied Brigitte. "I put a key in the Bible, and rested it on my fingers, while Cottin read the Gospel of St. John—and, madame, the key did not turn."

"Is that a sure sign?" asked the countess.

"Oh, madame, it's well known. I would stake my soul that he is still alive. God would never deceive us like that."

"In spite of the danger he will be in here; still, I long to see him."

"Poor Monsieur Auguste," cried Brigitte; "no doubt he is on the road, on foot."

"Hark! that is eight striking," exclaimed the countess, in terror.

She was afraid that she had stayed too long in the room; but there she could believe that her son still lived when she saw everything bear witness to his life. She went down-stairs, but before going into the salon she waited a moment under the colonnade of the staircase, and listened for some sound to awaken the silent echoes of the town. She smiled at Brigitte's husband, who kept watch like a sentinel; his eyes seemed stupefied with straining to catch the murmurs of the Place and the first sounds of the night. Everywhere and in everything she saw her son.

A moment afterward she had returned to her guests, affecting an air of gayety, and sat down to play at loto with some girls. But every now and then she complained of feeling unwell, and went to recline in her easy-chair by the fire-place.

Such was the situation, material and mental, in the house of Madame de Dey. Meanwhile, on the high-road from Paris to Cherbourg, a young man clad in a brown carmagnole, a costume in vogue at that period, directed his steps toward Carentan.

In the commencement of the Réquisitions there was little or no discipline. The exigencies of the moment scarcely allowed the republic to equip its soldiers fully at once, so that it was nothing unusual to see the roads full of réquisitionnaires still wearing their civil clothes. These young

men arrived at the halting-places before their battalions or remained there behind them, for the progress of each man depended on his personal capability of enduring the fatigues of a long journey. The traveler in question found himself considerably in advance of a battalion of *réquisitionnaires* which was on its way to Cherbourg, and which the Mayor of Carentan was waiting for from hour to hour, to billet on the inhabitants. The young man walked with heavy steps, but still he did not falter, and his gait seemed to show that he had long been accustomed to the severities of military life. Though the moon shed her light upon the pastures around Carentan, he had noticed a thick white bank of clouds ready to cover the whole country with snow. The fear of being caught in a hurricane no doubt hastened his steps, for he was walking at a pace little suited to his weariness. He carried an almost empty knapsack on his back, and in his hand a boxwood stick, cut from one of the high thick hedges which this shrub forms round most of the estates of Lower Normandy.

The towers of Carentan, thrown into fantastic relief by the moonlight, had only just come into sight, when this solitary traveler entered the town. His footfall awakened the echoes of the silent streets. He did not meet a creature, so he was obliged to inquire for the house of the mayor from a weaver who was still at his work. The mayor lived only a short distance off, and the *réquisitionnaire* soon found himself under shelter in the porch of his house. Here he applied for a billet order and sat down on a stone seat to wait. However, the mayor sent for him, so he was obliged to appear before him and become the object of a scrupulous examination. The *réquisitionnaire* was a foot soldier, a young man of fine bearing, apparently belonging to a family of distinction. His manners had the air of gentle birth, and his face expressed all the intelligence due to a good education.

“What is your name?” asked the mayor, casting a knowing glance at him.

“Julien Jussieu,” replied the *réquisitionnaire*.

The magistrate let an incredulous smile escape him.

“And you come—?”

“From Paris.”

“Your comrades must be some distance off,” replied the Norman in a bantering tone.

"I am three leagues in front of the battalion."

"No doubt some sentiment draws you to Carentan, Citoyen Réquisitionnaire?" said the mayor, with a shrewd look. "It is all right," he continued. The young man was about to speak, but he motioned him to be silent, and went on, "You can go, Citoyen Jussieu!"

There was a tinge of irony discernible in his accent as he pronounced these two last words and held out to him a billet order which directed him to the house of Madame de Dey. The young man read the address with an air of curiosity.

"He knows well enough that he hasn't got far to go; when he's once outside, he won't be long crossing the Place!" exclaimed the mayor, talking to himself as the young man went out. "He's a fine, bold fellow. God help him! He's got an answer ready to everything. Ay, but if it had been any one else but me, and they had demanded to see his papers, it would have been all up with him."

At this moment the clocks of Carentan struck half past nine. In the antechamber at Madame de Dey's the lanterns were lighted, the servants were helping their masters and mistresses to put on their clogs and *houppelandes* and mantles, the card-players had settled their accounts, and they were all leaving together, according to the established custom in little towns.

When they had exhausted all the formularies of adieu and were separating in the Place, each in the direction of his own home, one of the ladies, observing that that important personage was not with them, remarked: "It appears that the prosecutor intends to remain."

As a matter of fact, the countess was at that moment alone with that terrible magistrate; she waited, trembling, till it should please him to depart.

After a long silence, which inspired her with a feeling of terror, he said at last: "Citoyenne, I am here to carry out the laws of the Republic."

Madame de Dey shuddered.

"Hast thou nothing to reveal to me?" he asked.

"Nothing," she replied, in astonishment.

"Ah, madame," cried the prosecutor, sitting down beside her and changing his tone, "at this moment one word could send us—you and me—to the scaffold. I have watched your character, your mind, your manners too

closely to share in the mystification by which you have succeeded in misleading your guests this evening. You are expecting your son; I have not the least doubt of it."

The countess made an involuntary gesture of denial; but she had grown pale; the muscles of her face had contracted under the necessity of displaying a coolness she did not feel. The pitiless eye of the prosecutor had not lost one of these movements.

"Well, receive him," replied this magistrate of the Revolution, "but do not let him remain under your roof after seven o'clock in the morning. To-morrow at day-break I shall come to your house armed with a denunciation which I shall get drawn up."

She looked at him with a bewildered, numbed look that might have drawn pity from a tiger.

"I shall demonstrate," he continued, sweetly, "the falsity of this denunciation by a careful search. You will then be screened by the nature of my report from all ulterior suspicions. I shall speak of your patriotic gifts, your *civism*, and we shall be saved."

Madame de Dey suspected a snare. She remained motionless, her tongue was frozen and her face on fire. The sound of the knocker echoed through the house.

"Ah!" cried the mother, as she fell in terror upon her knees, "save him! save him!"

The public prosecutor cast a passionate glance at her.

"Yes, let us save him," he replied, "even at the cost of our own lives."

He raised her politely.

"I am lost!" she cried.

"Ah, madame!" he answered, with an oratorical gesture, "I would not owe you to anything—but to yourself alone."

"Madame, he's—" cried Brigitte, thinking her mistress was alone.

At the sight of the public prosecutor, the old servant, who had burst in, beaming with joy, grew pale and motionless.

"Who is it, Brigitte?" asked the magistrate, with an air of gentle intelligence.

"A réquisitionnaire sent us from the mayor's to lodge," answered the servant, showing him the billet order.

The prosecutor read the paper. "True," said he; "a battalion is coming to us to-night."

He went out.

At that moment the countess had too much need to believe in the sincerity of her former attorney for the least doubt of it to cross her mind.

Though she had scarcely the power to stand, she ascended the staircase precipitately, opened the door of the room, saw her son, and threw herself half dead into his arms. "My child, my child!" she sobbed, almost beside herself, as she covered him with kisses.

"Madame," said a stranger's voice.

"Ah, it is not he!" she cried, recoiling in horror. She stood upright before the *réquisitionnaire* and gazed at him with haggard eyes.

"My good God, how like he is!" said Brigitte.

There was a moment's silence; even the stranger shuddered at the sight of Madame de Dey.

The first blow had almost killed her, and now she felt the full extent of her grief. She leaned for support on Brigitte's husband. "Ah, monsieur," she said, "I could not bear to see you any longer. Allow me to leave you for my servants to entertain."

She went down to her own room, half carried by Brigitte and her old man-servant.

"What! Madame," cried the housekeeper, as she led her mistress to a chair, "is that man going to sleep in Monsieur Auguste's bed, and wear Monsieur Auguste's slippers, and eat the pasty that I made for Monsieur Auguste? If I was to be guillotined for it, I—"

"Brigitte!" cried Madame de Dey.

Brigitte was mute.

"Hold thy tongue, chatterbox," said her husband in a low voice. "Dost want to kill madame?"

At this moment the *réquisitionnaire* made a noise in his room as he sat down to the table.

"I can not stay here," cried Madame de Dey. "I will go into the conservatory. I shall be able to hear better there what goes on outside during the night."

She was still tossed between the fear of having lost her son and the hope of seeing him come back to her.

The silence of the night was horrible. The arrival of the battalion of *réquisitionnaires* in the town, when each

man sought his lodging, was a terrible moment for the countess. Her hopes were cheated at every footfall, at every sound. Presently nature resumed her awful calm.

Toward morning the countess was obliged to return to her own room.

Brigitte, who was watching her mistress's movements, not seeing her come out, went into the room and found the countess dead.

"She must have heard that *réquisitionnaire*," cried Brigitte. "As soon as he has finished dressing, there he is, marching up and down Monsieur Auguste's bedroom, as if he were in a stable, singing their damned 'Marseillaise!' It was enough to kill her."

The death of the countess was due to a deeper sentiment, and doubtless caused by some terrible vision. At the exact hour when Madame de Dey died at Carentan, her son was shot in Le Morbihan.

We may add this tragic event to all the evidence of sympathies ignoring the laws of space, which has been collected through the learning and curiosity of certain recluses. These documents will some day serve as the groundwork whereon to base a new science—a science which has hitherto lacked its man of genius.

W. W.

A PASSION IN THE DESERT.

“THE whole show is dreadful!” she cried, coming out of the menagerie of Monsieur Martin. She had just been looking at that daring speculator “working with his hyena,” to speak in the style of the programme. “By what means,” she continued, “can he have tamed these animals to such a point as to be certain of their affection for—”

“What seems to you a problem,” said I, interrupting, “is really quite natural.”

“Oh!” she cried, letting an incredulous smile wander over her lips.

“You think that beasts are wholly without passions?” I asked her. “Quite the reverse; we can communicate to them all the vices arising in our own state of civilization.”

She looked at me with an air of astonishment.

“Nevertheless,” I continued, “the first time I saw Monsieur Martin, I admit, like you, I did give vent to an exclamation of surprise. I found myself next to an old soldier with the right leg amputated, who had come in with me. His face had struck me. He had one of those intrepid heads, stamped with the seal of warfare, and on which the battles of Napoleon were written. Besides, he had that frank, good-humored expression which always impresses me favorably. He was without doubt one of those troopers who are surprised at nothing, who find matter for laughter in the contortions of a dying comrade, who bury or plunder him quite light-heartedly, who stand intrepidly in the way of bullets; in fact, one of those men who waste no time in deliberation, and would not hesitate to make friends with the devil himself. After looking very attentively at the proprietor of the menagerie getting out of his box, my companion pursed up his lips with an air of mockery and contempt, with that peculiar and ex-

pressive twist which superior people assume to show they are not taken in. Then, when I was expatiating on the courage of Monsieur Martin, he smiled, shook his head knowingly, and said, 'Well known.'

"How 'well known'?" I said. "If you would only explain me the mystery, I should be vastly obliged."

After a few minutes, during which we made acquaintance, we went to dine at the first restaurateur's whose shop caught our eye. At dessert a bottle of champagne completely refreshed and brightened up the memories of this odd old soldier. He told me his story, and I said that he had every reason to exclaim "Well known."

* * * * *

When she got home she teased me to that extent, and made so many promises that I consented to communicate to her the old soldier's confidences. Next day she received the following episode of an epic which one might call "The Frenchman in Egypt."

During the expedition in Upper Egypt under General Desaix, a Provençal soldier fell into the hands of the Mangrabins, and was taken by these Arabs into the deserts beyond the falls of the Nile.

In order to place a sufficient distance between themselves and the French army, the Mangrabins made forced marches, and only rested during the night. They camped round a well overshadowed by palm-trees, under which they had previously concealed a store of provisions. Not surmising that the notion of flight would occur to their prisoner, they contented themselves with binding his hands, and after eating a few dates and giving provender to their horses, went to sleep.

When the brave Provençal saw that his enemies were no longer watching him, he made use of his teeth to steal a cimeter, fixed the blade between his knees, and cut the cords which prevented him from using his hands. In a moment he was free. He at once seized a rifle and a dagger, then taking the precaution to provide himself with a sack of dried dates, oats, and powder and shot, and to fasten a cimeter to his waist, he leaped on to a horse, and spurred on vigorously in the direction where he thought to find the French army. So impatient was he to see a bivouac again that he pressed on the already tired courser at such speed that its flanks were lacerated with his spurs, and at last the

poor animal died, leaving the Frenchman alone in the desert. After walking some time in the sand with all the courage of an escaped convict, the soldier was obliged to stop, as the day had already ended. In spite of the beauty of an Oriental sky at night, he felt he had not strength enough to go on. Fortunately he had been able to find a small hill, on the summit of which a few palm-trees shot up into the air; it was their verdure seen from afar which had brought hope and consolation to his heart. His fatigue was so great that he lay down upon a rock of granite capriciously cut out like a camp bed. There he fell asleep without taking any precaution to defend himself while he slept. He had made the sacrifice of his life. His last thought was one of regret. He repented having left the Mangrabians, whose nomad life seemed to smile on him now that he was far from them and without help. He was awakened by the sun, whose pitiless rays fell with all their force on the granite and produced an intolerable heat; for he had had the stupidity to place himself inversely to the shadow thrown by the verdant majestic heads of the palm-trees. He looked at the solitary trees and shuddered. They reminded him of the graceful shafts crowned with foliage which characterize the Saracen columns in the cathedral of Arles.

But when, after counting the palm-trees, he cast his eyes around him, the most horrible despair was infused into his soul. Before him stretched an ocean without limit. The dark sand of the desert spread further than sight could reach in every direction, and glittered like steel struck with bright light. It might have been a sea of looking-glass, or lakes melted together in a mirror. A fiery vapor, carried up in streaks, made a perpetual whirlwind over the quivering land. The sky was lighted with an Oriental splendor of insupportable purity, leaving naught for the imagination to desire. Heaven and earth were on fire.

The silence was awful in its wild and terrible majesty. Infinity, immensity, closed in upon the soul from every side. Not a cloud in the sky, not a breath in the air, not a flaw on the bosom of the sand, ever moving in diminutive waves; the horizon ended as at sea on a clear day, with one line of light, definite as the cut of a sword.

The Provençal threw his arms round the trunk of one of the palm-trees, as though it were the body of a friend,

and then in the shelter of the thin straight shadow that the palm cast upon the granite, he wept. Then sitting down, he remained as he was, contemplating with profound sadness the implacable scene, which was all he had to look upon. He cried aloud, to measure the solitude. His voice, lost in the hollows of the hill, sounded faintly, and aroused no echo—the echo was in his own heart. The Provençal was twenty-two years old. He loaded his carbine.

“There’ll be time enough,” he said to himself, laying on the ground the weapon which alone could bring him deliverance.

Looking by turns at the black expanse and the blue expanse, the soldier dreamed of France. He smelled with delight the gutters of Paris; he remembered the towns through which he had passed, the faces of his fellow-soldiers, the most minute details of his life. His southern fancy soon showed him the stones of his beloved Provence, in the play of the heat which waved over the spread sheet of the desert. Fearing the danger of this cruel mirage, he went down the opposite side of the hill to that by which he had come up the day before. The remains of a rug showed that this place of refuge had at one time been inhabited. At a short distance he saw some palm-trees full of dates. Then the instinct which binds us to life awoke again in his heart. He hoped to live long enough to await the passing of some Arabs, or perhaps he might hear the sound of cannon; for at this time Bonaparte was traversing Egypt.

This thought gave him new life. The palm-tree seemed to bend with the weight of the ripe fruit. He shook some of it down. When he tasted this un hoped-for manna, he felt sure that the palms had been cultivated by a former inhabitant—the savory, fresh meat of the dates were proof of the care of his predecessor. He passed suddenly from dark despair to an almost insane joy. He went up again to the top of the hill and spent the rest of the day in cutting down one of the sterile palm-trees which the night before had served him for shelter. A vague memory made him think of the animals of the desert; and in case they might come to drink at the spring, visible from the base of the rocks but lost further down, he resolved to guard himself from their visits by placing a barrier at the entrance of his hermitage.

In spite of his diligence, and the strength which the fear

of being devoured asleep gave him, he was unable to cut the palm in pieces, though he succeeded in cutting it down. At eventide the king of the desert fell: the sound of its fall resounded far and wide, like a sigh in the solitude; the soldier shuddered as though he had heard some voice predicting woe.

But like an heir who does not long bewail a deceased parent, he tore off from this beautiful tree the tall broad green leaves which are its poetic adornment, and used them to mend the mat on which he was to sleep.

Fatigued by the heat and his work, he fell asleep under the red curtains of his wet cave.

In the middle of the night his sleep was troubled by an extraordinary noise. He sat up, and the deep silence around allowed him to distinguish the alternative accents of a respiration whose savage energy could not belong to a human creature.

A profound terror, increased still further by the darkness, the silence, and his waking images, froze his heart within him. He almost felt his hair stand on end, when by straining his eyes to their utmost he perceived through the shadow two faint yellow lights. At first he attributed these lights to the reflection of his own pupils, but soon the vivid brilliance of the night aided him gradually to distinguish the objects around him in the cave, and he beheld a huge animal lying but two steps from him. Was it a lion, a tiger, or a crocodile?

The Provençal was not educated enough to know under what species his enemy ought to be classed; but his fright was all the greater, as his ignorance led him to imagine all terrors at once. He endured a cruel torture, noting every variation of the breathing close to him without daring to make the slightest movement. An odor, pungent like that of a fox, but more penetrating, profounder—so to speak—filled the cave; and when the Provençal became sensible of this, his terror reached its height, for he could no longer doubt the proximity of a terrible companion, whose royal dwelling served him for a shelter.

Presently the reflection of the moon, descending on the horizon, lighted up the den, rendering gradually visible and resplendent the spotted skin of a panther.

This lion of Egypt slept, curled up like a big dog, the peaceful possessor of a sumptuous niche at the gate of a

hotel. Its eyes opened for a moment and closed again; its face was turned toward the man. A thousand confused thoughts passed through the Frenchman's mind. First he thought of killing it with a bullet from his gun, but he saw there was not enough distance between them for him to take proper aim—the shot would miss the mark. And if it were to wake! The thought made his limbs rigid. He listened to his own heart beating in the midst of the silence, and cursed the too violent pulsations which the flow of blood brought on, fearing to disturb that sleep which allowed him time to think of some means of escape.

Twice he placed his hand on his cimeter, intending to cut off the head of his enemy; but the difficulty of cutting the stiff short hair compelled him to abandon this daring project. To miss would be to die for *certain*, he thought; he preferred the chances of fair fight, and made up his mind to wait till morning. The morning did not leave him long to wait.

He could now examine the panther at ease. Its muzzle was smeared with blood.

"She's had a good dinner," he thought, without troubling himself as to whether her feast might have been on human flesh. "She won't be hungry when she gets up."

It was a female. The fur on her belly and flanks was glistening white; many small marks like velvet formed beautiful bracelets round her feet; her sinuous tail was also white, ending with black rings; the overpart of her dress, yellow like unburnished gold, very lissom and soft, had the characteristic blotches in the form of rosettes which distinguish the panther from every other feline species.

This tranquil and formidable hostess snored in an attitude as graceful as that of a cat lying on a cushion. Her blood-stained paws, nervous and well armed, were stretched out before her face, which rested upon them, and from which radiated her straight, slender whiskers, like threads of silver.

If she had been like that in a cage, the Provençal would doubtless have admired the grace of the animal, and the vigorous contrasts of vivid color which gave her robe an imperial splendor; but just then his sight was troubled by her sinister appearance.

The presence of the panther, even asleep, could not fail to produce the effect which the magnetic eyes of the serpent are said to have on the nightingale.

For a moment the courage of the soldier began to fail before this danger, though no doubt it would have risen at the mouth of a cannon charged with shell. Nevertheless, a bold thought brought daylight to his soul and sealed up the source of the cold sweat which sprung forth on his brow. Like men driven to bay, who defy death and offer their body to the smiter, so he, seeing in this merely a tragic episode, resolved to play his part with honor to the last.

"The day before yesterday the Arabs would have killed me, perhaps," he said. So considering himself as good as dead already, he waited bravely, with excited curiosity, his enemy's awakening.

When the sun appeared, the panther suddenly opened her eyes; then she put out her paws with energy, as if to stretch them and get rid of cramp. At last she yawned, showing the formidable apparatus of her teeth and pointed tongue, rough as a file.

"A regular *petite maitresse*," thought the Frenchman, seeing her roll herself about so softly and coquettishly. She licked off the blood which stained her paws and muzzle, and scratched her head with reiterated gestures full of prettiness. "All right, make a little toilet," the Frenchman said to himself, beginning to recover his gayety with his courage. "We'll say good-morning to each other presently;" and he seized the small short dagger which he had taken from the Mangrabins. At this moment the panther turned her head toward the man and looked at him fixedly without moving.

The rigidity of her metallic eyes and their insupportable luster made him shudder, especially when the animal walked toward him. But he looked at her caressingly, staring into her eyes in order to magnetize her, and let her come quite close to him. Then with a movement both gentle and amorous, as though he were caressing the most beautiful of women, he passed his hand over her whole body, from the head to the tail, scratching the flexible vertebræ which divided the panther's yellow back. The animal waved her tail voluptuously, and her eyes grew gentle: and when for the third time the Frenchman accom-

plished this interested flattery, she gave forth one of those purrings by which our cats express their pleasure; but this murmur issued from a throat so powerful and so deep, that it resounded through the cave like the last vibrations of an organ in a church. The man, understanding the importance of his caresses, redoubled them in such a way as to surprise and stupefy his imperious courtesan. When he felt sure of having extinguished the ferocity of his capricious companion, whose hunger had so fortunately been satisfied the day before, he got up to go out of the cave. The panther let him go out, but when he had reached the summit of the hill, she sprung with the lightness of a sparrow hopping from twig to twig, and rubbed herself against his legs, putting up her back after the manner of all the race of cats. Then regarding her guest with eyes whose glare had softened a little, she gave vent to that wild cry which naturalists compare to the grating of a saw.

“She is exacting,” said the Frenchman, smiling.

He was bold enough to play with her ears; he caressed her belly, and scratched her head as hard as he could. When he saw he was successful, he tickled her skull with the point of his dagger, watching for the moment to kill her; but the hardness of her bones made him tremble for his success.

The sultana of the desert showed herself gracious to her slave; she lifted her head, stretched out her neck, and manifested her delight by the tranquillity of her attitude. It suddenly occurred to the soldier that to kill this savage princess with one blow he must poniard her in the throat.

He raised the blade, when the panther, satisfied, no doubt, laid herself gracefully at his feet, and cast up at him glances in which, in spite of their natural fierceness, was mingled confusedly a kind of good-will. The poor Provençal eat his dates, leaning against one of the palm-trees, and cast his eyes alternately on the desert in quest of some liberator and on his terrible companion to watch her uncertain clemency.

The panther looked at the place where the date stones fell, and every time that he threw one down her eyes expressed an incredible mistrust.

She examined the man with an almost commercial prudence. However, this examination was favorable to him, for when he had finished his meager meal, she licked his

boots with her powerful rough tongue, brushing off with marvelous skill the dust gathered in the creases.

"Ah, but when she's really hungry!" thought the Frenchman. In spite of the shudder this thought caused him, the soldier began to measure curiously the proportions of the panther, certainly one of the most splendid specimens of its race. She was three feet high and four feet long without counting her tail; this powerful weapon, rounded like a cudgel, was nearly three feet long. The head, large as that of a lioness, was distinguished by a rare expression of refinement. The cold cruelty of a tiger was dominant, it was true, but there was also a vague resemblance to the face of a sensual woman. Indeed, the face of this solitary queen had something in the gayety of a drunken Nero. She had satiated herself with blood, and she wanted to play.

The soldier tried if he might walk up and down, and the panther left him free, contenting herself with following him with her eyes, less like a faithful dog than a big Angora cat, observing everything, and every movement of her master.

When he looked round, he saw by the spring the remains of his horse. The panther had dragged the carcass all that way; about two thirds of it had been devoured already. The sight reassured him.

It was easy to explain the panther's absence, and the respect she had had for him while he slept. The first piece of good luck emboldened him to tempt the future, and he conceived the wild hope of continuing on good terms with the panther during the entire day, neglecting no means of taming her and remaining in her good graces.

He returned to her, and had the unspeakable joy of seeing her wag her tail with an almost imperceptible movement at his approach. He sat down then, without fear, by her side, and they began to play together; he took her paws and muzzle, pulled her ears, rolled her over on her back, stroked her warm, delicate flanks. She let him do whatever he liked, and when he began to stroke the hair on her feet she drew her claws in carefully.

The man, keeping his dagger in one hand, thought to plunge it into the belly of the too confiding panther; but he was afraid that he would be immediately strangled in her last convulsive struggle. Besides, he felt in his heart

a sort of remorse which bid him respect a creature that had done him no harm. He seemed to have found a friend in a boundless desert; half unconsciously he thought of his first sweetheart, whom he had nicknamed "Mignonne" by way of contrast, because she was so atrociously jealous, that all the time of their love he was in fear of the knife with which she had always threatened him.

This memory of his early days suggested to him the idea of making the young panther answer to this name, now that he began to admire with less terror her swiftness, suppleness, and softness. Toward the end of the day he had familiarized himself with his perilous position. He now almost liked the painfulness of it. At last his companion had got into the habit of looking up at him whenever he cried in a falsetto voice, "Mignonne."

At the setting of the sun Mignonne gave, several times running, a profound melancholy cry.

"She's been well brought up," said the light-hearted soldier; "she says her prayers." But this mental joke only occurred to him when he noticed what a pacific attitude his companion remained in. "Come, *ma petite blonde*, I'll let you go to bed first," he said to her, counting on the activity of his own legs to run away as quickly as possible, directly she was asleep, and seek another shelter for the night.

The soldier awaited with impatience the hour of his flight, and when it had arrived he walked vigorously in the direction of the Nile; but hardly had he made a quarter of a league in the sand when he heard the panther bounding after him, crying with that saw-like cry more dreadful even than the sound of her leaping.

"Ah!" he said, "then she's taken a fancy to me; she has never met any one before, and it is really quite flattering to have her first love."

That instant the man fell into one of those movable quicksands so terrible to travelers, and from which it is impossible to save one's self. Feeling himself caught, he gave a shriek of alarm. The panther seized him with her teeth by the collar, and, springing vigorously backward, drew him as if by magic out of the whirling sand.

"Ah, Mignonne!" cried the soldier, caressing her enthusiastically; "we're bound together for life and death; but no jokes, mind!" and he retraced his steps.

From that time the desert seemed inhabited. It contained a being to whom the man could talk, and whose ferocity was rendered gentle by him, though he could not explain to himself the reason for their strange friendship. Great as was the soldier's desire to stay up on guard, he slept.

On awakening, he could not find Mignonne. He mounted the hill, and in the distance saw her springing toward him after the habit of these animals, who can not run on account of the extreme flexibility of the vertebral column. Mignonne arrived, her jaws covered with blood. She received the wonted caress of her companion, showing with much purring how happy it made her. Her eyes, full of languor, turned still more gently than the day before toward the Provençal, who talked to her as one would to a tame animal.

"Ah, mademoiselle, you are a nice girl, aren't you? Just look at that! So we like to be made much of, don't we? Aren't you ashamed of yourself? So you have been eating some Arab or other, have you? That doesn't matter. They're animals just the same as you are; but don't you take to eating Frenchmen, or I sha'n't like you any longer."

She played like a dog with its master, letting herself be rolled over, knocked about, and stroked alternately. Sometimes she herself would provoke the soldier, putting up her paw with a soliciting gesture.

Some days passed in this manner. This companionship permitted the Provençal to appreciate the sublime beauty of the desert. Now that he had a living thing to think about, alternations of fear and quiet, and plenty to eat, his mind became filled with contrasts and his life began to be diversified.

Solitude revealed to him all her secrets, and enveloped him in her delights. He discovered in the rising and setting of the sun sights unknown to the world. He knew what it was to tremble when he heard over his head the hiss of a bird's wings, so rarely did they pass, or when he saw the clouds, changing and many-colored travelers, melt one into another. He studied in the night-time the effects of the moon upon the ocean of sand, where the simoon made waves swift of movement and rapid in their change.

He lived the life of the Eastern day, marveling at its wonderful pomp; then, after having reveled in the sight of a hurricane over the plain where the whirling sands made red, dry mists and death-bearing clouds, he would welcome the night with joy, for then fell the healthful freshness of the stars, and he listened to imaginary music in the skies. Then solitude taught him to unroll the treasures of dreams. He passed whole hours in remembering mere nothings, and comparing his present life with his past.

At last he grew passionately fond of the panther—for some sort of affection was a necessity.

Whether it was that his will, powerfully projected, had modified the character of his companion, or whether, because she found abundant food in her predatory excursions in the deserts, she respected the man's life, he began to fear for it no longer, seeing her so well tamed.

He devoted the greater part of his time to sleep, but he was obliged to watch like a spider in its web that the moment of his deliverance might not escape him if any one should pass the line marked by the horizon. He had sacrificed his shirt to make a flag with, which he hung at the top of a palm-tree, whose foliage he had torn off. Taught by necessity, he found the means of keeping it spread out by fastening it with little sticks; for the wind might not be blowing at the moment when the passing traveler was looking through the desert.

It was during the long hours when he had abandoned hope that he amused himself with the panther. He had come to learn the different inflections of her voice, the expressions of her eyes; he had studied the capricious patterns of all the rosettes which marked the gold of her robe. Mignonne was not even angry when he took hold of the tuft at the end of her tail to count the rings, those graceful ornaments which glittered in the sun like jewelry. It gave him pleasure to contemplate the supple, fine outlines of her form, the whiteness of her belly, the graceful pose of her head. But it was especially when she was playing that he felt most pleasure in looking at her; the agility and youthful lightness of her movements were a continual surprise to him; he wondered at the supple way in which she jumped and climbed, washed herself and arranged her fur, crouched down and prepared to spring. However rapid her spring might be, however slippery the stone she

was on, she would always stop short at the word "Mignonne."

One day, in a bright midday sun, an enormous bird coursed through the air. The man left his panther to look at this new guest; but after waiting a moment, the deserted sultana growled deeply.

"My goodness! I do believe she's jealous," he cried, seeing her eyes become hard again. "The soul of Virginie has passed into her body, that's certain."

The eagle disappeared into the air, while the soldier admired the curved contour of the panther.

But there was such youth and grace in her form! She was beautiful as a woman! The blonde fur of her robe mingled well with the delicate tints of faint white which marked her flanks.

The profuse light cast down by the sun made this living gold, these russet markings, to burn in a way to give them an indefinable attraction.

The man and the panther looked at one another with a look full of meaning. The coquette quivered when she felt her friend stroke her head; her eyes flashed like lightning—then she shut them tightly.

"She has a soul," he said, looking at the stillness of this queen of the sands, golden like them, white like them, solitary and burning like them.

* * * * *

"Well," she said, "I have read your plea in favor of beasts; but how did two so well adapted to understand each other end?"

"Ah, well! you see, they ended as all great passions do end—by a misunderstanding. From some reason *one* suspects the other of treason; they don't come to an explanation through pride, and quarrel, and part from sheer obstinacy."

"Yet sometimes at the best moments a single word or a look is enough. But anyhow, go on with your story."

"It's horribly difficult, but you will understand, after what the old villain told me over his champagne. He said: 'I don't know if I hurt her, but she turned round, as if enraged, and with her sharp teeth caught hold of my leg—gently, I dare say; but I, thinking she would devour me, plunged my dagger into her throat. She rolled over, giv-

ing a cry that froze my heart; and I saw her dying, still looking at me without anger. I would have given all the world—my cross even, which I had not got then—to have brought her to life again. It was as though I had murdered a real person; and the soldiers who had seen my flag and were come to my assistance found me in tears.'

"' Well, sir,' he said, after a moment of silence, ' since then I have been in war in Germany, in Spain, in Russia, in France. I've certainly carried my carcass about a good deal, but never have I seen anything like the desert. Ah! yes, it is very beautiful!'

"' What did you feel there?' I asked him.

"' Oh, that can't be described, young man! Besides, I am not always regretting my palm-trees and my panther. I should have to be very melancholy for that. In the desert, you see, there is everything and nothing.'

"' Yes, but explain—'

"' Well,' he said, with an impatient gesture, ' it is God without mankind.' "

E. S.

LOST BY A LAUGH.

“ DURING the campaign of 1812,” said General Montriveau, “ I was the involuntary cause of a terrible calamity. You, Doctor Bianchon, who study the mind so carefully when you study the human body, may perhaps find in this story a solution to some of your problems on the Will.

“ It was my second campaign. Like a simple young lieutenant of artillery, I loved danger and laughed at everything.

“ When we reached the Beresina, the army—as you know—was utterly disorganized and without any idea of military discipline. In fact, it was a mere crowd of men of all nations moving instinctively from north to south. The soldiers would drive away a ragged, barefooted general from their camp-fires if he did not bring them food or fuel. Even after the passing of this celebrated river, the confusion was as great as before.

“ I had come quietly through the marshes of Zembin all alone, and was walking on, searching for a house where some one would take me in. Not finding one, or being driven away from those which I did find, toward evening I was fortunate enough to light upon a wretched little Polish farm. Nothing could give you an idea of the place unless you have seen the wooden houses of Lower Normandy or the poorest *metairies* of La Beauce. These dwellings consist of one single room divided off at one end by a partition of boards, the smaller portion serving as a place to store fodder in. Although the twilight was growing dim, I had descried in the distance a thin line of smoke arising from this house. Hoping to find companions more compassionate than those to whom I had as yet addressed myself, I marched on bravely to the farm. I went in and found several officers seated at table, eating horse-flesh broiled over

the coals, frozen beet-root, and potatoes. With them—~~ne~~ unusual sight—was a woman. I recognized two or three of the men as artillery captains belonging to the first regiment in which I had served. They greeted me with hurrahs and acclamations that would have surprised me indeed on the other side of the Beresina; but just then the cold was less intense, my comrades were enjoying rest and warmth and food, the floor was strewn with trusses of straw, and altogether there seemed to be a prospect of passing a comfortable night. After all, it was not much that we asked for them. My brother officers were philanthropists, when they could be so for nothing—by the way, one of the most usual modes of philanthropy. I sat down upon a heap of fodder and fell to.

“At the end of the table, on the side of the door communicating with the little room full of hay and straw, sat my former colonel. Among all the motley crowd of men whom it has been my lot to meet, he was one of the most extraordinary. He was an Italian. In southern countries, whenever human nature is fine, it is sublime. I do not know whether you have noticed the wonderful whiteness of Italians when their complexion is fair; it is marvelous—in the sunlight especially. When I read the fanciful portrait of Colonel Oudet which Charles Nodier has drawn us, I found my own impressions in every one of his polished sentences. An Italian, like the majority of the officers of his regiment—otherwise drafted by the emperor from the *armée d'Eugène*—my colonel was a man of lofty stature, eight or nine pouces high, admirably proportioned, a trifle stout perhaps, but of enormous strength, and as agile and wiry as a greyhound. In contrast with a profusion of black curls, the whiteness of his skin gleamed like a woman's. He had small hands, beautiful feet, and a gracious mouth; his nose was aquiline and finely formed, naturally pinched in at the point; in his frequent outbursts of passion it grew perfectly pallid.

“Indeed, the violence of his temper was so incredible, words would fail to describe it; but the sequel affords abundant proof. No one could remain unmoved before it. Perhaps I myself was the only person who was not afraid of him; but then he had conceived an extraordinary friendship for me. Whatever I did was right. When this passion was upon him the muscles of his brow contracted,

and formed a delta, or, rather, the horse-shoe of Redgauntlet, in the middle of his forehead. This mark struck you perhaps with even more terror than the magnetic sparks which flashed from his blue eyes. Then his whole body quivered, and his strength, ordinarily enormous, became almost boundless. He spoke with a strong *grasseymen*t, and his voice, at least as powerful as the voice of the Oudet of Charles Nodier, threw an incredible richness of tone into the consonant or syllable on which the *grasseymen*t fell. If at certain moments this Parisian vulgarism of pronunciation was an additional charm in him, you must actually have heard it to conceive what a sense of power it conveyed when he gave the word of command or spoke under the influence of emotion. When he was calm, his blue eyes beamed with angelic sweetness, and his clear-cut brow bore an expression full of charm. At a parade of the *armée d'Italie* there was not a man who could compare with him; and at the time of the last review which Napoleon held before we crossed the Russian frontier, even D'Orsay himself —the handsome D'Orsay—was surpassed by our colonel. This favored being was a mass of contradictions. Contrast is the essence of passion. You need not ask me then whether he exercised over women that irresistible influence before which our nature yields like liquid glass beneath the blower's pipe. However, by a strange fatality which perhaps a keen observer might explain, the colonel failed or refused to make more than a very few conquests.

"To give you an idea of his violence, I will tell you in a few words what I saw him do in one of these paroxysms of rage. One day we were ascending with our cannon a very narrow road that had a deep cutting on one side and a wood on the other. In the middle of the ascent we met another regiment of artillery headed by its colonel. This colonel tried to make the captain in command of the first battery of our regiment give way. Naturally enough the captain refused; so their colonel made a sign to his own first battery to advance. Notwithstanding the care which the driver took to keep as close to the wood as possible, the wheel of the first gun-carriage caught our captain's right leg and broke the bone clean in two, hurling him off his horse on the opposite side. It was all done in a moment. Our colonel, who was only a little way off, guessing what the whole quarrel was about, gallops up at full speed, right

through the wood and our artillery—we thought every instant his horse must have gone down, head over heels—and arrives on the scene in front of the other colonel, just at the moment that our captain cried out 'Help,' and fell. Well, our Italian colonel was no longer a human being. Foam burst from his mouth like the froth of champagne; he growled like a lion. Incapable of articulating a syllable, or even a cry, he made a terrible sign to his opponent, pointed to the wood, and drew his sword. The two colonels entered the wood. In a couple of seconds we saw the aggressor stretched on the ground, his head cleft in two by our colonel's sword. The men of the other regiment fell back. The deuce! and pretty quick, too. Our captain, who was almost killed, and lay moaning in the mud where the wheel of the gun-carriage had thrown him, had a wife, a most charming Italian from Messina. She was not altogether indifferent to our colonel. It was this circumstance which had added fuel to his fury. Her husband was entitled to his protection; it was his duty to defend the man as much as the woman herself.

"Now, in the cabin beyond Zebbin, where I had received such a warm welcome, this very captain sat opposite me, and his wife was at the other side of the table, opposite the colonel. She was a little woman, this Messinian, and very dark; her eyes were black and almond-shaped; within them glowed all the fervor of the Sicilian sun; her name was Rosina. Just at that time she was pitifully thin; her cheeks, like fruit exposed to all the rough chances of the way-side, were stained with dust. Though she was worn out with traveling, scarcely covered by her rags, her hair matted and in disorder, muffled in the fragment of a shawl, yet there was still somewhat of the charm of womanhood about her. Her graceful gestures, her curled red lips, her white teeth, the outline of her face, the form of her breasts, these were charms which cold and want and misery could not quite efface; to men who still could think of women they still spoke of love. Besides, Rosina possessed one of those natures apparently frail, but in reality full of nerve and power.

"The face of her husband, a Piedmontese, suggested (if one can combine two such ideas) a sort of mocking good nature. He was a gentleman, brave, and well educated, but he appeared to ignore the relations which had been

existing for nearly three years between his wife and the colonel. I used to attribute this indifference to Italian manners, or to some home secret of their own. Still, there was something in the man's face which always inspired me with an involuntary distrust. His lower lip was thin and very flexible, and turned down at the corners instead of up. This feature seemed to me to betray an undercurrent of cruelty in a character apparently indolent and phlegmatic.

" You may easily imagine that the conversation when I arrived was not of a very brilliant order. My comrades were worn out, and eat in silence. Of course they asked me a few questions, and we told each other our troubles, interspersing our stories with remarks on the campaign, the cold, the generals and their mistakes, and the Russians. A moment or two after my arrival, the colonel, having finished his meager repast, wipes his mustache, wishes us good-night, looks with his dark eyes at the Italian, and says to her, ' Rosina.' Then, without waiting for an answer, he goes to pass the night in the little store-room where the fodder was kept.

" It was not difficult to guess the meaning of the colonel's summons. Besides, the young woman allowed an indescribable gesture to escape her, which expressed not only the displeasure she must have felt at seeing their connection thus proclaimed abroad without any respect to persons, but also her consciousness of the insult offered both to her own dignity as a woman and to her husband. But more still the twitching of all her features, and the violent contraction of her eyebrows, seemed to betray a sort of presentiment; perhaps she had some instinct of her fate. She sat on quietly at the table. A moment afterward, probably as the colonel lay down in his hay or straw bed, he repeated ' Rosina.' The accent of this second appeal was still more brutally interrogative than the first. All the impatience, the despotism, the *will* of the man were expressed in that *grasseye*ment of his, and his Italian elongation of the vowels and consonants in those three syllables. Rosina grew pale, but she rose, passed out behind us, and went to the colonel.

" All my comrades preserved a profound silence; but I unhappily, after looking at them all round, began to laugh, and then my laughter was repeated from mouth to mouth.

“ ‘ *Tu ridi*,’ said the husband.

“ ‘ *Ma foi ! mon camarade !*’ said I, becoming serious again, ‘ I acknowledge that I am in the wrong. I am sure I beg your pardon most heartily, and if you are not content with my apologies I am ready to give you satisfaction.’

“ ‘ It is not you who are in the wrong, but I,’ he replied, coldly.

“ After this we lay down for the night in the room where we were, and soon were all sound asleep.

“ The next day, each man, without waking his neighbor or seeking a companion for the journey, started off again as his fancy led him. It was this sort of egoism which made our retreat one of the most terrible dramas of selfishness, misery, and horror ever played out under heaven.

“ However, about seven or eight hundred paces from our lodging, we all met again—almost all—and marched on together, one same necessity impelling us. We were like geese driven in flocks by the blind despotism of a child. When we had reached a mound, from whence the farm where we had spent the night was still in view, we heard cries like the bellowing of bulls, or the roaring of lions in the desert; but no—it was a din that can not be compared to any sound known to man. However, mingled with this ominous, horrible roaring, we could distinguish the feeble cries of a woman. We all turned round, a prey to an indescribable feeling of terror. The house was no longer visible; it had been barricaded, and was nothing but a pile of flame. Volumes of smoke, carried away by the wind, bore toward us these hoarse and hideous sounds, and with them a strong, unspeakable odor.

“ A few paces from us came the captain, walking up quickly to join our caravan. We all looked at him in silence, no one dared to question him; but he, divining our curiosity, pointed with his right hand to his own breast and with his left to the fire, and said, ‘ *Son’ io !*’

“ We continued our march without making a single remark.”

* * * * *

“ There is nothing more horrible than the rebellion of a sheep,” said De Marsay.

W. W.

GOLD.

AT this time I was living in a little street which no doubt you do not know, La Rue de Lesdiguières. It begins in La Rue Saint Antoine, opposite a fountain near La Place de la Bastille, and ends in La Rue de la Cerisaie. The love of science had thrown me into a garret, where I worked all through the night; the day I spent at a neighboring library, Le Bibliothèque de Monsieur. I lived frugally, accepting all the conditions of monastic life—conditions so necessary to men at work. When the weather was fine, the furthest I went was for a walk on Le Boulevard Bourdon. One passion alone drew me out of my studious habits; but even that was a study in itself. I used to go and watch the manners of the faubourg, its inhabitants, and their characters. As I was as ill-clad as the workmen and indifferent to appearances, I did not in any way put them on their guard against me. I was able to mix with them when they stood in groups, and watch them driving their bargains and disputing as they were leaving their work. With me, observation had even then become intuitive; it did not neglect the body, but it penetrated further—into the soul, or, rather, it grasped the exterior details so perfectly, that it at once passed beyond. It gave me the faculty of living the life of the individual upon whom it exercised itself, by allowing me to substitute myself for him, like the dervish in the “*Thousand and One Nights*” who took possession of the body and soul of people over whom he pronounced certain words.

Between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, I might fall in with a workman and his wife returning together from the Ambigu Comique. Then I would amuse myself by following them from Le Boulevard du Pont-aux-Choux to Le Boulevard Beaumarchais. First of all, the good people would talk about the piece they had seen; then, from

the thread to the needle, they passed on to their own affairs. The mother would drag along her child by the hand without listening to his cries or his questions. Then the pair would count up the money to be paid them next day, and spend it in twenty different ways. Then there were details of housekeeping, grumblings about the enormous price of potatoes, or the length of the winter and the dearness of fuel; and then forcible representations as to what was owing to the baker. At last the discussion grew acrimonious, and each of them would betray his character in forcible expressions. As I listened to these people I was able to enter into their life; I felt their rags upon my back, and walked with my feet in their worn-out shoes; their desires, their wants—everything passed into my soul, or else it was my soul that passed into theirs. It was the dream of a man awake. I grew warm with them against some tyrannical foreman, or the bad customers who made them return many times without paying them. To be quit of one's own habits, to become another than one's self by an inebriation of the moral faculties, and to play this game at will—this formed my distraction. To what do I owe this gift? Is it a kind of second sight? Is it one of those qualities which, if abused, induce madness? I have never sought to find the cause of this power; I possess it and I use it, that is all. It is enough to know that, at that time, I had decomposed the elements of the heterogeneous mass called the People—that I had analyzed it in such a way that I could set their proper value on its qualities, good and bad. I knew already the possible usefulness of the faubourg, that seminary of revolution which contains heroes, inventors, men of practical science, rogues, villains, virtues and vices, all oppressed by misery, stifled by poverty, drowned in wine, worn out by strong drink. You could not imagine how many unknown adventures, how many forgotten dramas, how many horrible and beautiful things lie hidden in this town of sorrow. Imagination will never reach the truth that lurks there, for no man can go to seek it out; the descent is too deep to discover its marvelous scenes of tragedy and comedy, its masterpieces which are born of chance.

I know not why I have kept the story I am about to relate so long without telling it. It is part of those strange tales stored in the bag whence memory draws them capri-

ciously, like the numbers of a lottery. I have many more of them, as strange as this one, and as deeply buried. They will have their turn, I assure you.

One day, my housekeeper, the wife of a workman, came to ask me to honor with my presence the marriage of one of her sisters. To make you understand what this marriage must have been like, I must tell you that I gave the poor creature forty sous a month. For this she came every morning to make my bed, clean my shoes, brush my clothes, sweep the room, and get ready my *déjeuner*; the rest of her time she went to turn the handle of a machine, earning at this hard work ten sous a day. Her husband, a cabinet-maker, earned four francs. But as they had a family of three children, it was almost impossible for them to get an honest living. I have never met with more thorough honesty than this man's and woman's. For five years after my leaving the district, La Mère Vaillant used to come to congratulate me on my name day, and bring me a bouquet and some oranges—and she was a woman who could never manage to save ten sous. Misery had drawn us together. I have never been able to give her more than ten francs, often borrowed on purpose. This may explain my promise to go to the wedding; I relied upon effacing myself in the poor creatures' merriment.

The marriage feast, the ball, the whole entertainment, took place on the first floor of a wine shop in La Rue de Charenton. The room was large, papered up to the height of the tables with a filthy paper, and lighted by lamps with tin reflectors; along the walls were wooden benches. In this room were twenty-four people, all dressed in their best, decked with large bouquets and ribbons, their faces flushed, full of the excitement of the *courtille*, dancing as if the world were coming to an end. The bride and bridegroom were embracing to the general satisfaction, and certain *hee-hees!* and *haw-haws!* were heard, facetious, but really less indecent than the timid glances of girls who have been well brought up. The whole company expressed an animal contentment which was somehow or other contagious. However, neither the physiognomies of the company, nor the wedding, nor in fact any of these people, have any connection with my story. Only bear in mind the strangeness of the frame. Picture to yourself the squalid, red shop, sniff the odor of the wine, listen to the

howls of merriment, linger awhile in this faubourg, among those workmen and poor women and old men who had given themselves up to pleasure for a single night!

The orchestra was composed of three blind men from Les Quinze-Vingts; the first was violin, the second clarionet, and the third flageolet. They were paid seven francs for the night among the three. You may imagine they did not give Rossini or Beethoven at that price; they played what they chose or could; with charming delicacy, no one reproached them. Their music did such brutal violence to the drum of my ear, that, after glancing round at the company, I looked at the blind trio—I was inclined to indulgence at once, when I recognized their uniform. The performers were in the embrasure of a window, so that you were obliged to be close to them to be able to distinguish their features. I did not go up immediately, but when I did get near them, I do not know how it was, but it was all over, the wedding party and the music disappeared; my curiosity was excited to the highest degree, for my soul passed into the body of the man who played the clarionet. The violin and the flageolet had both quite ordinary faces—the usual face of the blind—intense, attentive, and grave; but the clarionet's was a phenomenon such as arrests and absorbs the attention of a philosopher or an artist.

Imagine a plaster mask of Dante lighted up by the red glow of the *quinquet* lamp and crowned with a forest of silver-white hair. The bitter, sorrowful expression of this magnificent head was intensified by blindness, for thought gave a new life to the dead eyes; it was as if a scorching light came forth from them, the product of one single, incessant desire, itself inscribed in vigorous lines upon a prominent brow, scored with wrinkles, like the courses of stone in an old wall. The old man breathed into his instrument at random, without paying the least attention to the measure or the air; his fingers rose and fell as they moved the worn-out keys with mechanical unconsciousness; he did not trouble himself about making what are called in orchestral terms canards; but the dancers did not notice it any more than did my Italian's two acolytes—for I was determined he must be an Italian, and he was an Italian. There was something great and despotic in this old Homer keeping within himself an *Odyssey* doomed to oblivion. It was such real greatness that it still triumphed over his

abject condition, a despotism so full of life that it dominated his poverty. None of the violent passions which lead a man to good as well as to evil, and make of him a convict or a hero, were wanting in that grandly hewn, lividly Italian face. The whole was overshadowed by grizzled eyebrows which cast into shade the deep hollows beneath; one trembled lest one should see the light of thought reappear in them, as one fears to see brigands armed with torches and daggers come to the mouth of a cave. A lion dwelt within that cage of flesh, a lion whose rage was exhausted in vain against the iron of its bars. The flame of despair had sunk, quenched into its ashes, the lava had grown cold; but its channels, its destructions, a little smoke, bore evidence to the violence of the eruption and the ravages of the fire. These ideas revealed in the man's appearance were as burning in his soul as they were cold upon his face.

Between each dance the violin and the flageolet, gravely occupied with their bottle and glass, hung their instruments on to the button of their reddish-colored coats, stretched out their hand toward a little table placed in the embrasure of the window and on which was their canteen, and offered a full glass to the Italian. He could not take it himself, as the table was always behind his chair. He thanked them by a friendly gesture of the head. Their movements were accomplished with that precision which is always so astonishing in the blind of Les Quinze-Vingts; it almost makes you believe that they can see. I went toward the three blind men, so as to be able to listen to them; but when I was close to them they began to study me, and not, I suppose, recognizing a workman, they remained shy.

“What country do you come from, you who are playing the clarinet?”

“From Venice,” replied the blind man, with a slight Italian accent.

“Were you born blind, or did you become blind from—?”

“From an accident,” he replied, sharply; “it was a cursed cataract.”

“Venice is a fine town. I have always had a longing to go there.”

The old man's face lighted up, his wrinkles worked, he was deeply moved.

“If I went there with you,” he said, “you would not be losing your time.”

"Don't talk to him about Venice," said the violin, "or you'll start our doge off—especially as he has already put two bottles into his mouthpiece—has our prince."

"Come; let's go on, Père Canard," said the flageolet.

They all three began to play; but all the time they took to execute four country dances, the Venetian kept sniffing after me—he divined the excessive curiosity which I took in him. His expression lost the cold, sad look; some hope—I know not what—enlivened all his features and ran like a blue flame through his wrinkles; he smiled and wiped his bold, terrible brow; in fact, he grew cheerful, like a man getting on to his hobby.

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Eighty-two."

"How long have you been blind?"

"Nearly fifty years," he replied, with an accent which showed that his regrets did not arise only from his loss of sight, but from some great power of which he must have been despoiled.

"Why is it they call you the doge?" I asked.

"Oh, it's their joke," he said. "I am a patrician of Venice, and might have been a doge like the rest."

"What is your name, then?"

"Here, Le Père Canet," he said. "My name could never be written on the registers different from that; but in Italian it is Marco Facino Cane, principe di Varese."

"Why, you are descended from the famous condottiere Facino Cane, whose conquests passed to the Duke of Milan?"

"E vero," said he. "In those days the son of Cane took refuge in Venice to avoid being killed by the visconti, and got himself inscribed in the Golden Book. But now there is no Cane, any more than there is a book." And he made a terrible gesture of extinct patriotism and disgust for human affairs.

"But if you were a senator of Venice, you must have been rich. How did you come to lose your fortune?"

At this question he raised his head toward me with a truly tragic movement as if to examine me, and answered, "By misfortune!"

He no longer thought of drinking, and refused by a sign the glass of wine which the old flageolet was just at that

moment holding out to him, then his head sunk. These details were not of a kind to extinguish my curiosity. While these three machines were playing a country dance, I watched the old Venetian noble with the feelings which devour a man of twenty. I saw Venice and the Adriatic; I saw her in ruins in the ruins of his face. I walked in that city that is so dear to its inhabitants. I went from the Rialto to the Grand Canal, from the Quay of the Slaves to the Lido; I came back to the unique, sublime cathedral; I examined the casements of the Casa d'Oro, each with its different ornament; I gazed at the ancient palaces with all their wealth of marble; in a word, I saw all those marvels with which the savant sympathizes the more because he can color them to his liking, and does not rob his dreams of their poetry by the sight of the reality. I followed back the course of the life of this scion of the greatest of the condottieri, and sought to discover in him the traces of his misfortunes, and the causes of the physical and moral degradation which rendered yet more beautiful the sparks of greatness and nobleness that had just revived.

No doubt we shared the same thoughts, for I believe that blindness renders intellectual communication much more rapid, by preventing the attention from flitting away to exterior objects. The proof of our sympathy was not long in showing itself. Facino Cane stopped playing, rose from his seat, came to me, and said one word:

“Sortons !”

The effect it produced on me was like an electric douche. I gave him my arm and we went out.

When we were in the street, he said to me: “Will you take me to Venice, will you be my guide, will you have faith in me? You shall be richer than the ten richest houses in Amsterdam or London, richer than the Rothschilds, as rich as the ‘Thousand and One Nights.’”

I thought the man was mad; but there was a power in his voice which I obeyed. I let him guide me; he led me toward the trenches of the Bastile, as if he had eyes. He sat down on a very lonely place, where the bridge connecting the Canal Saint Martin and the Seine has since been built. I placed myself on another stone in front of the old man. His white hair glistened like threads of silver in the moonlight. The silence, scarcely broken by the stormy sounds which reached us from the boulevards, the purity of the

night—everything—combined to render the scene really fantastic.

“ You speak of millions to a young man, and do you think he would hesitate to endure a thousand evils in order to obtain them? But you are not making fun of me?”

“ May I die without confession,” he said, passionately, “ if what I am going to tell you is not true. I was twenty—just as you are now—I was rich, handsome, and a noble. I began with the greatest of all madness—Love. I loved as men love no longer; I even hid in a chest, at the risk of being stabbed to death in it, without having received anything more than the promise of a kiss. To die for *her* seemed to me life itself. In 1760 I became enamored of one of the Vendramini, a woman of eighteen, who was married to a Sagredo, one of the richest senators, a man of thirty, and mad about his wife. My mistress and I were as innocent as two cherubim when *il sposo* surprised us talking of love. I was unarmed; he missed me; I leaped upon him and strangled him with my two hands, wringing his neck like a chicken. I wanted to fly with Bianca, but she would not follow me. It was so like a woman! I went alone. I was condemned, and my goods were confiscated to the benefit of my heirs; but I had rolled up and carried away with me five pictures by Titian, my diamonds, and all my gold. I went to Milan, where I was left in peace, as my affair did not concern the state.”

“ Just one remark before I go on,” he said, after a pause. “ Whether the fancies of a woman when she conceives, or while she is pregnant, influences her child or not, it is certain that my mother during her pregnancy had a passion for gold. I have a monomania for gold, the satisfaction of which is so necessary to my life that, in all the situations I have found myself, I have never been without gold upon me. I have a constant mania for gold. When I was young I always wore jewelry, and always carried two or three hundred ducats about with me.”

As he said these words he drew two ducats out of his pocket and showed them to me.

“ I *feel* gold. Although I am blind, I stop before jewelers’ shops. This passion ruined me. I became a gambler for the sake of gambling with gold. I was not a cheat, I was cheated; I ruined myself. When I had no fortune left I was seized by a mad longing to see Bianca. I returned to

Venice in secret, found her again, and was happy for six months, hidden in her house and supported by her. I used to have delicious dreams of ending my life like this. She was courted by the provveditore; he divined he had a rival. In Italy we have an instinct for them. The dastard played the spy upon us and caught us in bed. You may guess how fierce the fight was. I did not kill him, but I wounded him very severely. This event shattered our happiness; since then I have never found another Bianca. I have enjoyed great favors; I have lived at the Court of Louis XV., among the most celebrated women; I have not found anywhere the noble qualities, the charms, the love, of my dear Venetian. The provveditore had his servants with him; he called them; they surrounded the palace, and entered. I defended myself that I might die before Bianca's eyes—she helped me to kill the provveditore. Before, this woman had refused to fly with me; but after six months of happiness she was ready to die on my body, and received several wounds. I was taken in a large mantle which they threw over me; they rolled me in it, carried me away in a gondola, and put me into a cell in the dungeon. I was twenty-two. I held the stump of my sword so tight that they would have been obliged to cut off my wrist in order to take it away. By a strange chance, or rather, inspired by some instinct of precaution, I hid this fragment of metal in a corner as a thing of possible use to me. My wounds were dressed; none of them were mortal; at twenty-two a man recovers from anything. I was to die by beheading. I feigned sickness to gain time. I believed I was in a cell bordering on the canal. My project was to escape by undermining the wall, and risk being drowned by swimming across the canal. My hopes were founded on the following calculations. Every time the jailer brought me food I read the notices fastened on the walls, such as The Palaces, The Canal, the Subterranean Prisons. Thus I succeeded in making out a plan which caused me some little apprehension, but was to be explained by the actual state of the ducal palace, which has never been finished. With that genius which the longing to recover one's liberty gives a man, I succeeded, by feeling the surface of a stone with the tips of my fingers, in deciphering an Arabic inscription, by which the author of the work warned his successors that he had dislodged two stones of

the last course of masonry and dug eleven feet underground. To continue his work it would be necessary to spread the fragments of stone and mortar caused by the work of excavation over the floor of the cell itself. Even if the jailers and inquisitori had not felt satisfied, that, from the construction of the building, it only needed an external guard, the arrangement of the cells, into which was a descent of several steps, allowed the floor to be gradually raised without attracting the jailer's notice. This immense labor had been superfluous at least for the unknown person who had undertaken it; its incompleteness was an evidence of his death. That his exertions might not be lost forever, it was necessary that a prisoner should know Arabic. Now, I had studied the Oriental languages at the Armenian convent. A sentence written behind the stone told the unhappy man's fate; he had died a victim to his immense wealth, which was coveted and seized by Venice. It would require a month to arrive at any result. While I worked, and during those moments when I was prostrate with fatigue, I *heard* the sound of gold; I *saw* gold before me; I was dazzled by diamonds! Now, listen. One night my blunt sword touched wood. I sharpened the stump and began to make a hole in the wood. In order to work I used to crawl on my belly like a snake. I stripped myself and worked like a mole, with my hands in front, and using the rock itself as a fulcrum. Two nights before the day I was to appear before my judges, I determined to make one last effort during the night. I bored through the wood, and my sword touched nothing. You can imagine my amazement when I put my eye to the hole. I was in the paneled roof of a cellar, in which a dim light enabled me to see a heap of gold. In the cellar were the doge and one of the Ten. I could hear their voices. I learned from their conversation that here was the secret treasure of the republic, the gifts of the doges, and the reserves of booty called 'the last hope of Venice,' a certain proportion of the spoils of all expeditions. I was saved. When the jailer came, I proposed to him to help me to escape and to fly with me, taking with us everything we could get.

"He had no cause to hesitate; he agreed. A ship was about to set sail for the Levant; every precaution was taken. I dictated a plan to my accomplice, and Bianca as-

sisted in carrying it out. To avoid giving the alarm, Bianca was to join us at Smyrna.

"In one night we enlarged the hole and descended to the secret treasury of Venice. What a night it was! I saw four tuns full of gold. In the first chamber the silver was piled up in two even heaps, leaving a path between them by which to pass through the room; the coins formed banks which covered the walls to the height of five feet. I thought the jailer would have gone mad; he sung, he leaped, he laughed, he gamboled about in the gold. I threatened to throttle him if he wasted the time or made a noise. In his delight he did not at first see a table where the diamonds were. I swooped down upon it so skillfully that I was able to fill my sailor's vest and the pockets of my pantaloons. My God! I did not take a third part. Under this table were ingots of gold. I persuaded my companion to fill as many sacks as we could carry with gold, pointing out to him that it was the only way to avoid being discovered in a foreign country. The pearls, jewelry, and diamonds, I told him, would lead to our being found out. In spite of our greed we could not take more than two thousand livres of gold, and this necessitated six journeys across the prison to the gondola. The sentinel at the water-gate had been bought with a bag containing ten livres of gold; as for the two gondoliers, they believed they were serving the republic. At day-break we departed. When we were out at sea and I thought of that night, when I recalled the sensations which I had experienced, and seemed to see again that immense treasure, of which I calculated I must have left thirty millions in silver and twenty millions in gold, besides several millions in diamonds, pearls, and rubies, a feeling of madness rose within me. I had gold fever. We were landed at Smyrna, and immediately re-embarked for France. As we were going on board the French vessel, God did me the favor of relieving me of my accomplice. At the moment I did not think of all the bearings of this mishap; I was greatly rejoiced at it. We were so completely enervated that we remained in a state of torpor, without speaking, waiting until we were in a place of safety to play our parts at our ease. It is not to be wondered at that the fellow's head had been turned. You will see how God punished me. I did not consider myself safe until I had disposed of two thirds of my dia-

monds in London and Amsterdam, and realized my gold dust in negotiable species. For five years I hid myself in Madrid; then in 1770 I came to Paris under a Spanish name, and lived in the most brilliant style.

“Bianca was dead.

“In the midst of my pleasures, when I was enjoying a fortune of six millions, I was struck with blindness. I conclude that this infirmity was the result of my sojourn in the prison and my labors in the dark, if indeed my faculty for seeing gold did not imply an abuse of the powers of vision and predestine me to lose my eyes. At this time I loved a woman to whom I had resolved to link my fate. I had told her the secret of my name; she belonged to a powerful family, and I had every hope from the favor shown me by Louis XV.; she was a friend of Madame du Barry. I had put my trust in this woman; she advised me to consult a famous oculist in London; then, after staying in the town for some months, she deserted me in Hyde Park, robbing me of the whole of my fortune and leaving me without resources. I was obliged to conceal my name, for it would have exposed me to the vengeance of Venice. I could not invoke any one’s help; I was afraid of Venice. The spies whom this woman had attached to my person had made capital out of my blindness. I spare you the history of adventures worthy of Gil Blas. Your Revolution came; I was obliged to enter at Les Quinze-Vingts; this creature got me admitted, after having kept me for two years at Bisêtre as insane. I have never been able to kill her—I could not see to—and I was too poor to pay another hand. If, before I lost Benedetto Carpi—my jailer—I had consulted him on the situation of my cell, I should have been able to find the treasury again and return to Venice when the republic was abolished by Napoleon. However, in spite of my blindness, let us go to Venice. I will find the door of the prison; I shall see the gold through the walls; I shall *feel* it where it lies buried beneath the waters—for the events which overturned the power of Venice are such that the secret of the treasury must have died with Vendramino, the brother of Bianca, a doge who, I hoped, would have made my peace with the Ten. I addressed notes to the First Consul, I proposed an agreement with the Emperor of Austria; every one treated me as a madman. Come; let us start for Venice; let us start beggars. we

shall come back millionaires; we will buy back my property, and you shall be my heir, you shall be Prince of Varese."

I was thunder-struck at this confidence, at the sight of that white head. Before the black waters of the trenches of the Bastile, sleeping as still as the canals of Venice, it assumed in my imagination the proportions of a poem. I gave no answer. Facino Cane no doubt believed that I judged him, like all the rest, with disdainful pity. He made a gesture expressive of all the philosophy of despair. Perhaps his story had carried him back to those happy days at Venice; he seized his clarionet and played with the deepest pathos a Venetian song, a barcarolle in which he recovered all his first talent—the talent which was his when he was a patrician and in love. It was, as it were, a *super flumina Babylonis*. My eyes filled with tears. If some belated passers-by chanced to be walking along Le Boulevard Bourdon, I dare say they stopped to listen to this last prayer of the exile, this last regret of a lost name, mingled with memories of Bianca. But gold soon got the mastery again, and its fatal passion quenched the glimmering of youth.

"That treasure!" he said. "I see it always, waking and in my dreams. I take my walks there; the diamonds sparkle; I am not so blind as you think. Gold and diamonds lighten my night—the night of the last Facino Cane, for my title passes to the Memmi. Good God! the murderer's punishment has begun betimes. Ave Marie!"

He recited some prayers which I could not hear.

"We will go to Venice!" I exclaimed, as he was getting up.

"Then I have found my man!" he cried, with a glow upon his face.

I gave him my arm and led him back. At the door of Les Quinze-Vingts he pressed my hand. Just then some of the people from the wedding were going home, shouting enough to blow one's head off.

"We will start to-morrow?" said the old man.

"As soon as we have got some money."

"But we can go on foot; I will ask alms—I am strong, and when a man sees gold before him he is young."



Facino Cane died during the winter after lingering for two months. The poor man had caught a chill.

W. W.

DOOMED TO LIVE.

THE clock of the little town of Menda had just struck midnight. At this moment a young French officer was leaning on the parapet of a long terrace which bounded the gardens of the castle. He seemed plunged in the deepest thought—a circumstance unusual amid the thoughtlessness of military life; but it must be owned that never were the hour, the night, and the place more propitious to meditation. The beautiful Spanish sky stretched out its azure dome above his head. The glittering stars and the soft moonlight lighted up a charming valley that unfolded all its beauties at his feet. Leaning against a blossoming orange-tree, he could see, a hundred feet below him, the town of Menda, which seemed to have been placed for shelter from the north winds at the foot of the rock on which the castle was built. As he turned his head he could see the sea, framing the landscape with a broad silver sheet of glistening water. The castle was a blaze of light. The mirth and movement of a ball, the music of the orchestra, the laughter of the officers and their partners in the dance, were borne to him mingled with the distant murmur of the waves. The freshness of the night imparted a sort of energy to his limbs, weary with the heat of the day. Above all, the gardens were planted with trees so aromatic, and flowers so fragrant, that the young man stood plunged, as it were, in a bath of perfumes.

The castle of Menda belonged to a Spanish grandee, then living there with his family. During the whole of the evening his eldest daughter had looked at the officer with an interest so tinged with sadness that the sentiment of compassion thus expressed by the Spaniard might well call up a reverie in the Frenchman's mind.

Clara was beautiful; and although she had three brothers and a sister, the wealth of the Marquis de Leganes seemed

great enough for Victor Marchand to believe that the young lady would have a rich dowry. But how dare he hope that the most bigoted old hidalgo in all Spain would ever give his daughter to the son of a Parisian grocer? Besides, the French were hated. The marquis was suspected by General Gautier, who governed the province, of planning a revolt in favor of Ferdinand VII. For this reason the battalion commanded by Victor Marchand had been cantoned in the little town of Menda, to hold the neighboring hamlets, which were dependent on the marquis, in check. Recent dispatches from Marshal Ney had given ground for fear that the English would shortly land on the coast, and had indicated the marquis as a man who carried on communication with the Cabinet of London.

In spite, therefore, of the welcome which the Spaniard had given him and his soldiers, the young officer, Victor Marchand, remained constantly on his guard. As he was directing his steps toward the terrace, whither he had come to examine the state of the town and the country districts intrusted to his care, he debated how he ought to interpret the friendliness which the marquis had unceasingly shown him, and how the tranquillity of the country could be reconciled with his general's uneasiness. But in one moment these thoughts were driven from his mind by a feeling of caution and well-grounded curiosity. He had just perceived a considerable number of lights in the town. In spite of the day being the Feast of St. James, he had given orders that very morning that all lights should be extinguished at the hour prescribed by his regulations; the castle alone being excepted from this order. He could plainly see, here and there, the gleam of his soldiers' bayonets at their accustomed posts; but there was a solemnity in the silence, and nothing to suggest that the Spaniards were a prey to the excitement of a festival. After having sought to explain the offense of which the inhabitants were guilty, the mystery appeared all the more unaccountable to him because he had left officers in charge of the night police and the rounds. With all the impetuosity of youth, he was just about to leap through a breach and descend the rocks in haste, and thus arrive more quickly than by the ordinary road at a small outpost placed at the entrance of the town nearest to the castle, when a faint sound stopped him. He thought he heard the light footfall of a woman

upon the gravel walk. He turned his head and saw nothing; but his gaze was arrested by the extraordinary brightness of the sea. All of a sudden he beheld a sight so portentous that he stood dumfounded; he thought that his senses deceived him. In the far distance he could distinguish sails gleaming white in the moonlight. He trembled, and tried to convince himself that this vision was an optical illusion, merely the fantastic effect of the moon on the waves. At this moment a hoarse voice pronounced his name. He looked toward the breach, and saw, slowly rising above it, the head of the soldier whom he had ordered to accompany him to the castle.

“Is that you, commandant?”

“Yes; what do you want?” replied the young man in a low voice. A sort of presentiment warned him to be cautious.

“Those rascals down there are stirring like worms. I have hurried, with your leave, to tell you my own little observations.”

“Go on,” said Victor Marchand.

“I have just followed a man from the castle who came in this direction with a lantern in his hand. A lantern’s a frightfully suspicious thing. I don’t fancy it was tapers my fine Catholic was going to light at this time of night. ‘They want to eat us body and bones!’ says I to myself; so I went on his track to reconnoiter. There, on a ledge of rock, not three paces from here, I discovered a great heap of fagots.”

Suddenly a terrible shriek rang through the town, and cut the soldier short. At the same instant a gleam of light flashed before the commandant. The poor grenadier received a ball in the head and fell. A fire of straw and dry wood burst into flame, like a house on fire, not ten paces from the young man. The sound of the instruments and the laughter ceased in the ball-room. The silence of death, broken only by groans, had suddenly succeeded to the noise and music of the feast. The fire of a cannon roared over the surface of the sea. Cold sweat trickled down the young officer’s forehead; he had no sword. He understood that his men had been slaughtered, and the English were about to disembark. If he lived he saw himself dishonored, summoned before a council of war. Then he measured with his eyes the depth of the valley. He

sprung forward, when just at that moment his hand was seized by the hand of Clara.

"Fly!" said she. "My brothers are following to kill you. Down yonder at the foot of the rock you will find Juanito's Andalusian. Quick!"

The young man looked at her for a moment, stupefied. She pushed him on; then, obeying the instinct of self-preservation which never forsakes even the bravest man, he rushed down the park in the direction she had indicated. He leaped from rock to rock, where only the goats had ever trod before; he heard Clara crying out to her brothers to pursue him; he heard the footsteps of the assassins; he heard the balls of several discharges whistle about his ears; but he reached the valley, he found the horse, mounted, and disappeared swift as lightning. In a few hours he arrived at the quarters occupied by General Gautier. He found him at dinner with his staff.

"I bring you my life in my hand!" cried the commandant, his face pale and haggard.

He sat down and related the horrible disaster. A dreadful silence greeted his story.

"You appear to me to be more unfortunate than criminal," said the terrible general at last. "You are not accountable for the crime of the Spaniards, and unless the marshal decides otherwise, I acquit you."

These words could give the unfortunate officer but slight consolation.

"But when the emperor hears of it!" he exclaimed.

"He will want to have you shot," said the general. "However— But we will talk no more about it," he added, severely, "except how we are to take such a revenge as will strike wholesome fear upon this country, where they carry on war like savages."

One hour afterward a whole regiment, a detachment of cavalry, and a convoy of artillery were on the road. The general and Victor marched at the head of the column. The soldiers, informed of the massacre of their comrades, were filled with extraordinary fury. The distance which separated the town of Menda from the general quarters was passed with marvelous rapidity. On the road the general found whole villages under arms. Each of these wretched townships was surrounded and their inhabitants decimated.

By some inexplicable fatality, the English ships stood off instead of advancing. It was known afterward that these vessels had outstripped the rest of the transports and only carried artillery. Thus the town of Menda, deprived of the defenders it was expecting, and which the sight of the English vessels had seemed to assure, was surrounded by the French troops almost without striking a blow. The inhabitants, seized with terror, offered to surrender at discretion. Then followed one of those instances of devotion not rare in the Peninsula. The assassins of the French, foreseeing, from the cruelty of the general, that Menda would probably be given over to the flames and the whole population put to the sword, offered to denounce themselves. The general accepted this offer, inserting as a condition that the inhabitants of the castle, from the lowest valet to the marquis himself, should be placed in his hands. This capitulation agreed upon, the general promised to pardon the rest of the population and to prevent his soldiers from pillaging or setting fire to the town. An enormous contribution was exacted, and the richest inhabitants gave themselves up as hostages to guarantee the payment, which was to be accomplished within twenty-four hours.

The general took all precautions necessary for the safety of his troops, provided for the defense of the country, and refused to lodge his men in the houses. After having formed a camp, he went up and took military possession of the castle. The members of the family of Leganes and the servants were gagged, and shut up in the great hall where the ball had taken place, and closely watched. The windows of the apartment afforded a full view of the terrace which commanded the town. The staff was established in a neighboring gallery, and the general proceeded at once to hold a council of war on the measures to be taken for opposing the debarkation. After having dispatched an aid-de-camp to Marshal Ney, with orders to plant batteries along the coast, the general and his staff turned their attention to the prisoners. Two hundred Spaniards, whom the inhabitants had surrendered, were shot down then and there upon the terrace. After this military execution the general ordered as many gallows to be erected on the terrace as there were prisoners in the hall of the castle, and the town executioner to be brought. Victor Marchand made use of the time from then until

linner to go and visit the prisoners. He soon returned to the general.

"I have come," said he, in a voice broken with emotion, "to ask you a favor."

"You?" said the general in a tone of bitter irony.

"Alas!" replied Victor, "it is but a melancholy errand that I am come on. The marquis has seen the gallows being erected, and expresses a hope that you will change the mode of execution for his family. He entreats you to have the nobles beheaded."

"So be it!" said the general.

"They further ask you to allow them the last consolations of religion, and to take off their bonds; they promise not to attempt to escape."

"I consent," said the general; "but you must be answerable for them."

"The old man also offers you the whole of his fortune if you will pardon his young son."

"Really!" said the general. "His goods already belong to King Joseph; he is under arrest." His brow contracted scornfully, then he added: "I will go beyond what they ask. I understand now the importance of the last request. Well, let him buy the eternity of his name, but Spain shall remember forever his treachery and its punishment. I give up the fortune and his life to whichever of his sons will fulfill the office of executioner. Go, and do not speak to me of it again."

Dinner was ready, and the officers sat down to table to satisfy appetites sharpened by fatigue.

One of them only—Victor Marchand—was not present at the banquet. He hesitated for a long time before he entered the room. The haughty family of Leganes were in their agony. He glanced sadly at the scene before him. In this very room, only the night before, he had watched the fair heads of those two young girls and those three youths as they circled in the excitement of the dance. He shuddered when he thought how soon they must fall, struck off by the sword of the headsman. Fastened to their gilded chairs, the father and mother, their three sons, and their two young daughters, sat absolutely motionless. Eight serving-men stood upright before them, their hands bound behind their backs. These fifteen persons looked at each other gravely, their eyes scarcely betraying the

thoughts that surged within them. Only profound resignation and regret for the failure of their enterprise left any mark upon the features of some of them. The soldiers stood likewise motionless, looking at them, and respecting the affliction of their cruel enemies. An expression of curiosity lighted up their faces when Victor appeared. He gave the order to unbind the condemned, and went himself to loose the cords which fastened Clara to her chair. She smiled sadly. He could not refrain from touching her arm and looking with admiring eyes at her black locks and graceful figure. She was a true Spaniard; she had the Spanish complexion and the Spanish eyes, with their long curled lashes and pupils blacker than the raven's wing.

"Have you been successful?" she said, smiling upon him mournfully with somewhat of the charm of girlhood still lingering in her eyes.

Victor could not suppress a groan. He looked, one after the other, at Clara and her three brothers. One, the eldest, was aged thirty; he was small, even somewhat ill made, with a proud, disdainful look, but there was a certain nobleness in his bearing; he seemed no stranger to that delicacy of feeling which elsewhere has rendered the chivalry of Spain so famous. His name was Juanito. The second, Felipe, was aged about twenty; he was like Clara. The youngest, Manuel, was eight. A painter would have found in his features a trace of that Roman steadfastness which David has given to children's faces in his episodes of the republic. The old marquis, his head still covered with white locks, seemed to have come forth from a picture of Murillo. The young officer shook his head. When he looked at them, he was hopeless that he would ever see the bargain proposed by the general accepted by either of the four; nevertheless, he ventured to impart it to Clara. At first she shuddered, Spaniard though she was; then, immediately recovering her calm demeanor, she went and knelt down before her father.

"Father," she said, "make Juanito swear to obey faithfully any orders that you give him, and we shall be content."

The marquise trembled with hope; but when she leaned toward her husband, and heard—she who was a mother—the horrible confidence whispered by Clara, she swooned away. Juanito understood all. He leaped up like a lion in

its cage. After obtaining an assurance of perfect submission from the marquis, Victor took upon himself to send away the soldiers. The servants were led out, handed over to the executioner, and hanged. When the family had no guard but Victor to watch them, the old father rose and said:

“ Juanito!”

Juanito made no answer, except by a movement of the head, equivalent to a refusal; then he fell back in his seat and stared at his parents with eyes dry and terrible to look upon. Clara went and sat on his knee, put her arm round his neck, and kissed his eyelids.

“ My dear Juanito,” she said, gayly, “ if thou didst only know how sweet death would be to me if it were given by thee! I should not have to endure the odious touch of the headsman’s hands. Thou wilt cure me of the woes that were in store for me—and, dear Juanito, thou couldst not bear to see me belong to another; well—”

Her soft eyes cast one look of fire at Victor, as if to awaken in Juanito’s heart his horror of the French.

“ Have courage,” said his brother Felipe, “ or else our race, that has almost given kings to Spain, will be extinct.”

Suddenly Clara rose; the group which had formed round Juanito separated, and this son, dutiful in his disobedience, saw his aged father standing before him, and heard him cry in a solemn voice, “ Juanito, I command thee.”

The young count remained motionless. His father fell on his knees before him; Clara, Manuel, and Felipe did the same instinctively. They all stretched out their hands to him as to one who was to save their family from oblivion. They seemed to repeat their father’s words: “ My son, hast thou lost the energy, the true chivalry of Spain? How long wilt thou leave thy father on his knees? What right hast thou to think of thine own life and its suffering? Madame, is this a son of mine?” continued the old man, turning to his wife.

“ He consents,” cried she in despair. She saw a movement in Juanito’s eyelids, and she alone understood its meaning.

Mariquita, the second daughter, still knelt on her knees, and clasped her mother in her fragile arms; her little brother, Manuel, seeing her weeping hot tears, began to

chide her. At this moment the almoner of the castle came in; he was immediately surrounded by the rest of the family and brought to Juanito.

Victor could bear this scene no longer. He made a sign to Clara, and hastened away to make one last effort with the general. He found him in high good humor, in the middle of the banquet, drinking with his officers; they were beginning to make merry.

An hour later, a hundred of the principal inhabitants of Menda came up to the terrace, in obedience to the general's orders, to witness the execution of the family of Leganes. A detachment of soldiers was drawn up to keep back these Spanish burghers who were ranged under the gallows on which the servants of the marquis still hung. The feet of these martyrs almost touched their heads. Thirty yards from them a block had been set up, and by it gleamed a cimeter. The headsman also was present, in case of Juanito's refusal. Presently, in the midst of the profoundest silence, the Spaniards heard the footsteps of several persons approaching, the measured tread of a company of soldiers, and the faint clinking of their muskets. These diverse sounds were mingled with the merriment of the officers' banquet, just as before it was the music of the dance which had concealed preparations for a treacherous massacre. All eyes were turned toward the castle; the noble family was seen advancing with incredible dignity. Every face was calm and serene; one man only leaned, pale and haggard, on the arm of the priest. Upon this man he lavished all the consolations of religion—upon the only one of them doomed to life. The executioner understood, as did all the rest, that for that day Juanito had undertaken the office himself. The aged marquis, his wife, Clara, Mariquita, and their two brothers, came and knelt down a few steps from the fatal spot. Juanito was led thither by the priest. As he approached the block, the executioner touched him by the sleeve and drew him aside, probably to give him certain instructions.

The confessor placed the victims in such a position that they could not see the executioner; but like true Spaniards, they knelt erect without a sign of emotion.

Clara was the first to spring forward to her brother. "Juanito," she said, "have pity on my faint-heartedness; begin with me."

At that moment they heard the footsteps of a man running at full speed, and Victor arrived on the tragic scene. Clara was already on her knees, already her white neck seemed to invite the edge of the cimeter. A deadly pallor fell upon the officer, but he still found strength to run on.

"The general grants thee thy life if thou wilt marry me," he said to her in a low voice.

The Spaniard cast a look of proud disdain on the officer. "Strike, Juanito," she said in a voice of profound meaning.

Her head rolled at Victor's feet. When the marquise heard the sound, a convulsive start escaped her; this was the only sign of her affliction.

"Am I placed right so, dear Juanito?" little Manuel asked his brother.

"Ah, thou weeppest, Mariquita!" said Juanito to his sister.

"Yes," answered the girl; "I was thinking of thee, my poor Juanito; thou wilt be so unhappy without us."

At length the noble figure of the marquis appeared. He looked at the blood of his children; then he turned to the spectators, who stood mute and motionless before him. He stretched out his hands to Juanito, and said in a firm voice:

"Spaniards, I give my son a father's blessing. Now, marquis, strike without fear, as thou art without fault."

But when Juanito saw his mother approach, supported by the confessor, he groaned aloud: "She fed me at her own breast."

His cry seemed to tear a shout of horror from the crowd. At this terrible sound the noise of the banquet and the laughter and merry-making of the officers died away.

The marquise comprehended that Juanito's courage was exhausted. With one leap she had thrown herself over the balustrade, and her head was dashed in pieces against the rocks below. A shout of admiration burst forth. Juanito fell to the ground in a swoon.

"Marchand has just been telling me something about this execution," said a half-drunken officer. "I'll warrant, general, it wasn't by your orders that—"

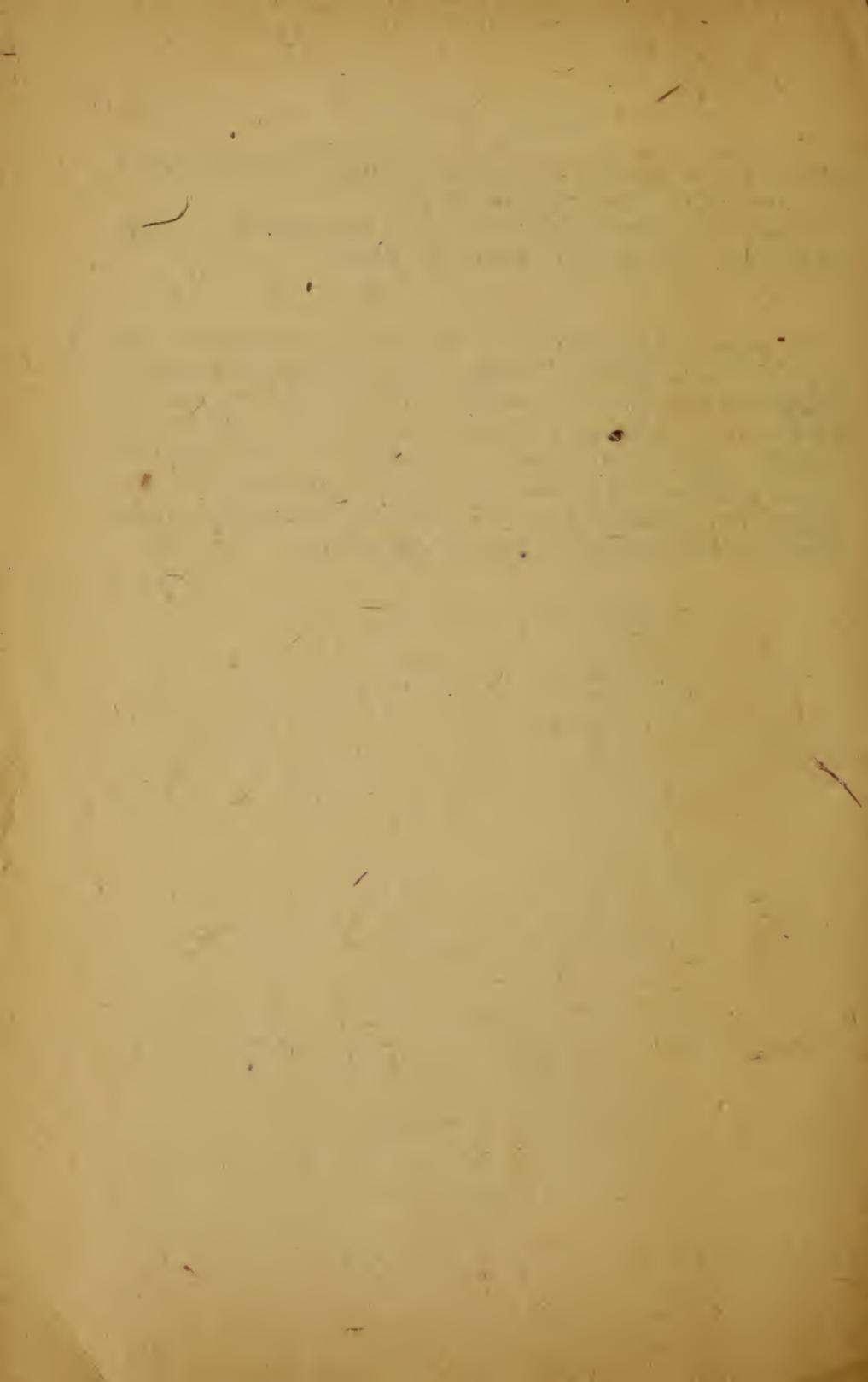
"Have you forgotten, messieurs," cried General Gauzier, "that during the next month there will be five hun-

dred French families in tears, and that we are in Spain?
Do you wish to leave your bones here?"

After this speech there was not a man, not even a sub-lieutenant, who dared to empty his glass.

* * * * *

In spite of the respect with which he is surrounded—in spite of the title of El Verdugo (the executioner), bestowed upon him as a title of nobility by the King of Spain—the Marquis de Leganes is a prey to melancholy. He lives in solitude, and is rarely seen. Overwhelmed with the load of his glorious crime, he seems only to await the birth of a second son, impatient to seek again the company of those shades who are about his path continually. W. W.



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